THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

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II. A.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

THE EPISTLES OF ST IGNATIUS AND ST POLYCARP

WITH A HISTORY OF
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE SECOND CENTURY

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INTRODUCTORY PREFACE,

COMPRISING A

History of the Church in the Second Century,

By the Late Professor Burton.

CHAPTER I.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT—SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES—CONTINUANCE OF MIRACULOUS POWERS—DEATH OF SYMEON, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM—DEATH OF IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH—LETTER OF PLINY TO TRAJAN—PERSECUTION IN BITHYNIA—REVOLT OF THE JEWS—DEATH OF TRAJAN.

IT was a melancholy moment for the Church when she was left to herself, without any of that "glorious company of the apostles," who had seen their Redeemer while He was in the flesh, and had received from His own lips the charge to feed His flock. He had committed the trust to faithful hands. They were few in number, and weak in worldly resources; but, guided and strengthened from above, they went forth into all lands, and planted the banner of the cross upon the ruins of heathenism. One by one they were withdrawn from their earthly labours; and it was mercifully provided by God, that the Church did not feel all at once the severity of her loss. The apostles had also zealous companions, who assisted them in their ministry, and who were placed by them over the churches in different countries. We have seen the Ephesian converts committed by Paul to Timothy, and those in Crete

to Titus. Luke appears to have resided for some time at Philippi; and Mark was sent by Peter to watch over the flock at Alexandria. These may serve as examples of what was done in other churches. So long as the apostles who founded the churches were alive, and able to visit them in person, it was not necessary to have one fixed superintendent in each city or town. The apostles themselves continued to watch over their converts; and Paul, though residing at Ephesus, was consulted, and gave directions as head of the Church of Corinth. Even in his lifetime he seems to have found the care of all his churches too great for him; and we can well understand the earnest charge which he gave to Timothy not long before his death, that he would commit the things which he had heard to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also.

The state of the Asiatic churches, when John was residing at Ephesus, may explain the system which had now been generally established for governing Christian communities. The apostle, in his Apocalypse, mentions seven churches in that part of the world, with which he seems to have been intimately acquainted. Two of them, those of Ephesus and Laodicea, are known to have been planted some years before the death of Paul; and the five others were in countries which he frequently visited. Nearly half a century may therefore have elapsed between their first foundation and the notice they received from John. At the latter period, they were all of them under the same form of church government. One person was put over each of them, who is called by John the Angel of his respective church; but within a very few years, the heads of the same churches were spoken of as bishops, the meaning of which term, in Greek, is simply *an overseer;* and this name, which had been applied by the apostles to presbyters, as being persons appointed by themselves to overlook their flocks, came at length to be applied to the successors of the apostles, who did not follow them in travelling from country to country, but resided permanently in some one city or town. In one sense, therefore, there were several bishops or overseers in each church, for every presbyter might have borne that name: but as soon as the system became general which was established in the seven Asiatic churches, and which we have seen to have been adopted also at Antioch, and Rome, and Alexandria, of

selecting one man to superintend the church, the term bishop was limited to this one superintendent of the whole body. In most cases a bishop had only the charge of the Christians in one single town.

The term *diocese* was not then known; though there may have been instances where the care of more than one congregation was committed to a single bishop, of which we have a very early example in all the Cretan churches being intrusted by Paul to Titus. The name which was generally applied to the flock of a single pastor, was one from which our present word *parish* is derived, which signified his superintendence over the *inhabitants* of a particular place; and if we add to the two orders of bishops and presbyters, the one which was more ancient than either of them, that of deacons, we shall have the form of church government which appears to have been generally established at the beginning of the second century.

It is interesting to think that many of the persons who were now presiding over churches, had been appointed to their important stations by apostles, or at least had seen the men who had been personally acquainted with our Lord. They form the connecting link between the first or apostolic age, and that which immediately succeeded it. There is also one circumstance connected with their history which must not be forgotten,—that the apostles were able, by laying on their hands, to convey those preternatural gifts of the Spirit which enabled persons to work miracles. There must have been many persons living, at the beginning of the second century, upon whom some apostle had thus laid his hands. The Angels or Bishops of the seven Asiatic churches may all have had this advantage, and may all have been appointed to their bishoprics by John. One of them, the Bishop of Smyrna, was probably Polycarp, who certainly held this station a few years later, and is always said to have received his appointment from an apostle, as well as to have been personally acquainted with John. His interesting life will occupy our attention later in the century; and he is mentioned now, as showing that there must have been many persons still alive, though the apostles were withdrawn, who possessed some portion of miraculous power; and that miracles did not cease suddenly and abruptly with the last of the apostles, but were still exerted occasionally

for the benefit of the Church, till God thought fit to withdraw them altogether.

This seems the most rational conclusion to which we can come, concerning the duration of miraculous powers in the Church; and by adopting it, we steer between two opposite opinions, both of which must be considered erroneous; one, which would strictly limit miracles to the age of the apostles, and assert that there was no instance of their being worked afterwards; and another, which maintains that the power of working them has never ceased, but is exercised to the present day, in the true Church. This is not the place for refuting the latter opinion; and it is sufficient to say that the Protestant churches do not profess to exercise any such power. But the former opinion must also be pronounced untenable, unless we say that all the persons who had worked miracles in the life-time of the apostles, were dead before the end of the century, or that they suddenly lost the power at the moment when John, the last of the apostles, died.

The reader has already been reminded that spiritual gifts were distributed in great abundance by Paul; and there is no reason to think that the other apostles were more sparing in communicating them. The gift of healing was undoubtedly exercised by many persons besides the apostles; and it is scarcely possible to suppose that they were all dead before the time which has been fixed for the death of John. We must however conclude that they were becoming, almost daily, less numerous; and although the Christian writers of the second century say expressly that preternatural gifts of the Spirit were occasionally witnessed in their own day, they fully confirm the view which has been here taken of this subject, and show that instances of this kind were much more uncommon than they had been formerly. As the numbers of believers increased, and the churches became more settled, there was less need of these miraculous interferences to confirm the faith of believers, or to attract fresh converts; and we may now proceed to consider the state of some of the principal churches at the beginning of the second century.

The Christians of Jerusalem, as we have already seen, had been committed, since the year 62, to the care of Symeon, who had not only known our Lord while on earth, but was one of his relations, being the brother of James, who had preceded

him in that office. The descendants of Jude were placed over other churches in Judæa, on the same ground of their being connected with the family of Jesus. Such a relationship could hardly fail to make them zealous pastors of Christ's flock, which was now beginning to be a prey to the *grievous wolves*, who, according to the predictions of Paul, had broken in upon the fold after the death of the apostles. These were the teachers of Gnosticism, whose doctrines were peculiarly dangerous to the Jewish Christians, from their having borrowed so much from the Law of Moses. It may be hoped that the Christians who returned to Jerusalem with Symeon, after the siege, were safe from these delusive errors; or, if they listened to their Ebionite brethren, they would be kept in the true faith by the vigilance of their bishop. The enemies of the Gospel were, therefore, the enemies of Symeon, and he at length fell a sacrifice to the same fears and jealousies which, on two former occasions, had caused inquiry to be made after the descendants of David.

There is nothing which personally connects the Emperor Trajan with this act of cruelty. After the year 101 he was engaged, for several campaigns, in conquering Dacia, and probably heard or cared little about the Christians. In the year 104, Atticus was governor of Syria, and Symeon was brought before him, as being one of the descendants of David. If the Jews had shown any inclination to revolt, we could understand the jealousy which led a Roman officer to hinder them from rallying round a popular leader of the family of David. But we might have thought that a harmless old man, who was living amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, might have been suffered to go down to his grave in peace. It was not the president of Syria who thirsted for his blood; though, like Pilate, he had not firmness enough to protect a man whom he believed to be innocent. The Gnostic heretics, who justly regarded Symeon as their greatest enemy, denounced him to Atticus as a dangerous person, on account of his descent from David; and perhaps a Roman officer might find it difficult to understand how several thousand Jews could look up to a descendant of David as their head, and yet not be objects of political suspicion. Symeon was now a hundred and twenty years old; and the firmness with which he endured an examination by torture, though it lasted

several days, filled the spectators with astonishment. His fate was, however, determined, and his sufferings were at length closed by crucifixion. His successor in the see of Jerusalem was Justus; but a person named Thebuthis, who had wished to gain the appointment for himself, excited a schism in the Church, and joined one of the numerous sects into which the Gnostic philosophy was now divided.

It is stated upon good authority, that at this time the people were excited in many different places to persecute the Christians; and one distinguished sufferer was Ignatius, who may be truly called the apostolical bishop of Antioch. He had been appointed to that see about the year 70; and the spirit of persecution which had shown itself in the reign of Domitian did not entirely pass him over: but he escaped for that time; and the beginning of the second century saw the bishopric of Antioch still possessed by one, who, if tradition may be believed, had been personally acquainted with at least three apostles, Peter, Paul, and John. It seems to have been about the year 107 that Trajan came to Antioch on his way to make war with Parthia. The emperor himself may still have had no feeling of hostility against the Christians; but he found the people of Antioch already in a state of religious excitement, and he consented that Ignatius should be sent to Rome, to be exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

During his voyage to Italy he landed at different places on the coasts of Asia and Greece, and was met by several bishops, who came from their respective cities to see the venerable martyr. At Smyrna he had the gratification of meeting with Polycarp, who, like himself, had been known to the last surviving apostle; and it is not improbable that some of the other persons who now visited him had conversed with some of the apostles. Though he was on his way to death, he found time to write letters to different churches, seven of which are still extant; and we may judge of the respect which was deservedly paid to his memory, when we find that Polycarp himself collected copies of these letters, and sent them to the Christians at Philippi. It is to be regretted that Polycarp's own letters, which appear to have been numerous, have not been preserved. A portion of that which he wrote to the Philippians has come down to us, and forms, together

with the letters of his friend Ignatius, and the single letter of Clement to the Church of Corinth, that most interesting and valuable collection which is known by the name of the Works of the Apostolical Fathers.

The genuineness of Clement's Epistle, and of the fragment of the Epistle of Polycarp, has scarcely ever been called in question; but the Epistles of Ignatius have led to much controversy. There can be no doubt that they were corrupted and interpolated at an early period; and copies of these counterfeit epistles, as well as others which bear the name of Ignatius, have come down to us. Fortunately, however, the seven epistles have also been preserved in a much shorter form; and it is now generally agreed among the learned, that these are genuine, and free from the interpolations which disfigure the larger edition.

Ignatius arrived at Rome in time to form part of the spectacle in the public games, which were exhibited at the end of the year. On the 19th of December, he was exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, and his death appears to have been the work of a moment. The larger and harder bones, which resisted the teeth of the animals, were taken up by his friends, and, with an indulgence which could hardly have been expected, were allowed to be carried back to Antioch, where they were buried near one of the gates in the suburbs. The persecution of the Christians had already ceased with the removal of the bishop; so that it was perhaps a temporary storm, which spent itself and subsided. The successor of Ignatius in the bishopric was Heros.

With respect to the people of Rome, we need not conclude that a persecution was also being carried on there at the same time; for so long as the spectators in the amphitheatre were gratified with the sight of human victims, they did not care who it was that afforded them this amusement: and many persons, perhaps, did not even know that Ignatius came from Antioch, much less that he was a Christian bishop. Trajan may have sent him to Rome for execution, as he would have sent any common criminal; and the fact of his bones being carried away by his friends, would rather seem to show, that at this time there was no particular excitement in the capital on account of religion.

We are unable to connect the emperor personally with the

original instigation of any of these acts of cruelty. His Parthian wars kept him in the East for some years, and he did not return to Rome till 110 or 111. It was in the latter year that he was called upon to give a positive decision upon the legality of punishing Christianity as a crime. The younger Pliny was sent as proprætor into Bithynia in 110, and in the following year he presided at a public festival held in honour of the emperor. On these occasions the Christians were often called upon to take part in the sacrifices, and to perform some act in honour of the gods or the emperor, which they felt to be forbidden by their religion. Their refusal to comply was looked upon as impiety, or disaffection to the government; and Pliny found himself obliged, as chief magistrate of the province, to investigate the cases of this kind which were brought before him. The progress of Christianity in that part of the empire must have astonished and alarmed him; for Pliny was really religious according to the notions in which he had been brought up. The heathen temples were almost deserted; the sellers of victims for the sacrifices complained that they had no purchasers; persons of either sex, and of all ages and ranks, even Roman citizens, had embraced the new opinions; and Pliny himself met with persons who had once been converted, but had abjured Christianity, twenty years before.

This state of things might cause less surprise when we remember that the Gospel had found its way into Bithynia as early as the date of Peter's first epistle, so that it may have been making progress in that country for nearly half a century. It is satisfactory that our accounts are, in this instance, so authentic and unquestionable; and the scene which Pliny witnessed in Bithynia was probably exhibited at this period in various portions of the empire. Heathenism appeared to be already hastening to its decay; but there were too many persons interested in preserving it, to allow the triumph of Christianity to be so soon completed. There is no reason to think that Pliny was naturally cruel, or inclined to injustice. He acknowledged that the Christians who were brought before him had committed no crime, and he even bore testimony to the purity of their principles and practice: but he suffered himself to be persuaded that their obstinate adherence to their religion was itself criminal; and if, upon a third examination,

they did not consent to renounce it, he even ordered them to execution.

There was at this time no precise and definite law which sanctioned such cruelty: but foreign superstitions, as they were termed, had at various times been suppressed; and the present emperor, as well as his predecessors, had prohibited private meetings and associations. It was not difficult to represent the Christians as guilty on both these charges: but Pliny, though he allowed them to be punished, did not feel satisfied without consulting the emperor, who at this time was at Rome. His letter to Trajan, as well as the answer which he received, are both extant; and though the emperor, perhaps, did not intend to be severe, the opinion delivered by him on this occasion became a precedent, which enabled provincial magistrates to exercise as much cruelty as they pleased against the Christians. He wrote to Pliny that he fully approved of what he had done, and directed him not to make any search after the Christians, and in no case to listen to anonymous accusations. If the suspected party cleared himself by worshipping the gods, he was to be acquitted: but there was added to this apparent lenity, that if any such persons were brought before the proprætor and convicted, or, in other words, if they adhered to the religion which they believed to be true, they were to be put to death.

There is too good reason to think that this counsel was the cause of many Christians losing their lives. When Pliny wrote to the emperor, he told him that no compulsion could make a Christian abjure his faith. He had himself frequently tried to induce them to join in a sacrifice, or in imprecations against Christ; but they preferred death to either of these impieties: and when Trajan's answer arrived, the work of persecution was likely to proceed more actively than before. It is painful to think that the first emperor who sanctioned such cruelties by law was Trajan, and that the first magistrate who put the law in force was Pliny; both of these persons, according to heathen notions of morality, being considered amiable, and lovers of justice. But their attempt to suppress Christianity totally failed. We have the evidence of a heathen writer, who lived in the middle of this same century, that there were then many Christians in part of the country which was subject to the government of the proprætor of Bithynia. They were, in

fact, very numerous through the whole of Asia Minor; and if a person had at this time gone over the same ground which had been traversed by Paul, from the eastern confines of Cilicia to the shores of the Ægean, he would have found churches regularly established not only in the most flourishing and most civilized Grecian colonies, but in parts of the country which had scarcely yet been subdued by the arms of Rome.

The reign of Trajan continued for six years after the date of his celebrated letter to Pliny; but history has preserved no further particulars which connect him personally with the Christians. In the year 115 he suppressed a formidable revolt of the Jews in Africa and Cyprus, and the restless character of that people led him to treat them with great severity in the country about the Euphrates. Palestine does not appear to have been included in these acts of vengeance. The Jews had begun to return to it in considerable numbers; and we shall see presently that they had lost neither their patriotism nor their impatience of subjection to foreigners: but they were not yet prepared to revolt; and Judæa was at this time under the government of an experienced and determined officer. We should be most interested to know whether the punishment inflicted upon the rebellious Jews was felt in any measure by the Christians; but history is still silent upon the subject. If we might judge by the rapid succession of the bishops of Jerusalem after the death of Symeon, we might perhaps conclude that the deaths of some of them were hastened by martyrdom. The names of seven bishops have been preserved who held that see from the year 107 to 125. But if the Christians of Jerusalem were suffering during that period from the unbelieving Jews, or from the heathen, we can only say that we know nothing of the cause or manner of the persecution. The emperor himself was not likely to interfere with them in any part of his dominions, during the latter part of his reign. His brilliant career of victories was now exchanged for a succession of defeats. One conquered province after another revolted; he was repulsed in a personal attack upon the fortress of Atra; and before his death, which happened at Selinus in Cilicia in 117, nearly all his conquests in the East were lost.

We are perhaps justified in concluding, from a general review of the reign of Trajan, that the progress of Christianity was not impeded during that period by any systematic opposi-

tion of the government. The emperor's attention was directed to the new religion by Pliny: but, like many other subjects which were mentioned in letters from the provinces, this perhaps did not dwell long upon his mind; and we may infer from the correspondence itself, that neither Trajan nor Pliny had troubled themselves about the Christians before. It has been mentioned, that the emperor's answer formed a precedent, which was often acted upon with great cruelty in the course of the present century; but we do not meet with any other instance in the course of the late reign. We shall see reason to think, that a season of peace was more injurious to the Christians than one of war, as giving the heathen more leisure and opportunity to notice their proceedings; and the late emperor was so constantly engaged in military expeditions, that if such a circumstance was favourable to the Christians, it may account in some measure for their religion making such a rapid advance. That this was the case in the former part of the second century cannot be doubted. The martyrdoms of Symeon and Ignatius arrest our attention, on account of the rank and fortitude of the sufferers, and the iniquity of their sentence. But we are not told in either case, that they had many companions in death; and the perpetrators of such cruelties are apt to forget, that a party does not become less attached to its opinions, or less zealous in supporting them, by seeing its leaders suffer martyrdom with firmness. The death of Ignatius caused the loss of one individual to the Christians; but their enemies were not aware that by leading him in a kind of triumph from Antioch to Rome, and allowing him to touch at several intermediate places, they were doing the greatest service to the cause which they were wishing to destroy.

CHAPTER II.

TRAVELS OF HADRIAN: VISITS ALEXANDRIA — BASILIDES, SATURNINUS, AND THE GNOSTICS—WRITINGS OF CHRISTIANS — CHURCH OF ATHENS — LETTER OF HADRIAN, PROTECTING THE CHRISTIANS—SECOND JEWISH WAR—GENTILE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM—DEATH OF HADRIAN—CAUSES OF PERSECUTION.

HADRIAN, who had been adopted by Trajan a short time before his death, succeeded him in the empire. Though accustomed hitherto to military command, he was not inattentive to literature and the arts. Being fond of observing the peculiarities of different countries, he passed several years of his reign in foreign travel. In addition to this inquisitive and antiquarian spirit, he is said to have paid particular attention to the religious customs of the people whom he visited; but his own prejudices were strongly in favour of the religion in which he had been educated. While he was upon his travels, he could not fail to be struck with the progress which Christianity was making among his subjects; and he appears to have looked with equal contempt upon the superstitions of the Egyptians, the Jews, and the Christians. In more than one country which he visited, he would witness the effects of the late insurrection of the Jews; and his dislike to that people was shown by his building a temple to Jupiter on the spot where Solomon's temple had formerly stood. This was on a visit which he paid to Jerusalem soon after his accession; and he seems to have taken a pleasure in insulting the Jews, by giving to the city which had lately been rising out of the ruins of Jerusalem the appearance and character of a Roman town. The inhabitants were unable at present to resist the insult; but their discontent was only smothered for a time, till it broke out into open rebellion.

Alexandria, which he also visited on the same journey, had been nearly destroyed by the quarrels between the Jews and the other inhabitants. The emperor ordered it to be rebuilt; and his curiosity in prying into different forms of religion would find a rich treat while he resided in the capital of

Egypt. We have a letter written by him a few years later, in which he chose to confound the worshippers of Serapis, a popular idol of the Egyptians, with the Christians. He also mentioned by name the Jews and Samaritans, and treated them all as impostors and mountebanks; but there is no evidence of his having at this time shown any ill-will towards the Christians. His opinion of their religious tenets was very likely to be erroneous, by his confounding them with the Gnostics, who had learnt many of their absurdities and impieties in the schools of Alexandria. Simon Magus, the first founder of Gnosticism, had studied in that city. His successor was Menander, who lived at the end of the first century, and the beginning of the second; and the place in which he attracted most followers was Antioch. Menander was followed by Saturninus and Basilides, who became the heads of two different sects or parties of Gnostics; and Basilides, who spread his opinions in Alexandria, had already obtained his celebrity when that city was visited by Hadrian.

It is not improbable that Basilides quitted Alexandria when the riots caused by the Jews had made it so unsafe a place of residence; and this may account for his peculiar opinions becoming so notorious in the world at large. His notion concerning Jesus Christ was the same with that of the other Gnostics, who believed His body to be a phantom: but Basilides is charged with having invented the new and extravagant doctrine, that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus. He could not persuade himself that a divine emanation, such as he believed Christ to have been, could unite itself to a material and corruptible body; but at the same time he could not resist the evidence, which was now universally diffused by the four Gospels, that a real and substantial body had been nailed to the cross. He therefore had recourse to the extraordinary notion, that Simon of Cyrene was substituted for Jesus; which may remind the reader of what has been already observed, that Gnosticism entirely destroyed the doctrine of the atonement: that Jesus Christ suffered death for the sins of the world, did not, and could not, form any part of the religious tenets of Basilides. We are not, therefore, to be surprised that the heads of the Church took such pains to expose the errors of a system which, though it appears at first unworthy of serious notice,

was fatally subversive of the very foundations of our faith.

The followers of Basilides were also addicted to magic, which was the case in a greater or less degree with all the Gnostics: but the Basilidians carried the practice of this impiety to a greater length than their predecessors; and several amulets or charms have been preserved to the present day, which show that they belonged to the votaries of this unholy superstition. The same sect has also been reproached for the grossest licentiousness of conduct; and though the Christian writers may be suspected of some exaggeration in drawing the character of the Gnostics, it cannot be doubted, as has been already observed, that one division of them maintained upon principle, that all actions were indifferent; and that the heathen, who chose to confound Christianity with Gnosticism, were induced to consider it as inculcating maxims of the most shameless depravity. It should however be added, that there is no sufficient evidence that Basilides himself had countenanced such impurities. Saturninus is known to have gone into the opposite extreme, and his followers practised the most rigid austerities; so that if Hadrian, like many other of the heathen, confounded the Christians with the Gnostics, it cannot be thought strange that he spoke of their religion with contempt. There was, perhaps, no city in which he was so likely to find out his mistake, and to have formed correct notions of the Christians, as Alexandria, where Christianity had been taught, from a very early period, in regularly established schools. Had he visited the city a few years earlier or later, he might have gratified his curiosity by attending the lectures of the professors of this new religion: but he came there when many Christians were likely to have left the city on account of the late disturbances; and Alexandria was always the receptacle of so many different religions, that it is not very surprising if he looked upon them all as equally erroneous.

The history of Basilides is interesting in another point of view, as making us acquainted with works expressly written by Christians in defence of their religion. The epistles of Clement and Ignatius have been already mentioned, which were circulated and read with great avidity; but they were interesting only to Christians, and were not likely, as indeed

they were not intended, to give the heathen a knowledge of Christianity. The precise period is not marked when the Christians first began to explain or defend their doctrines in writing, nor have their earliest works come down to us; but it is not probable that anything of this kind appeared till after the beginning of the second century. Basilides, the Gnostic, is known to have been an author, and the name of at least one Christian writer has been preserved who published against him. This was Agrippa Castor, who appears to have lived in the reign of Hadrian; and it is much to be regretted that his writings have perished: for, though an exposure of Gnosticism might now be considered easy, it was no light task in those days for a Christian to enter the lists against one who had attracted a numerous party in the schools of Alexandria.

The travels of Hadrian led him to pay more than one visit to Athens, where we know that he would find a considerable body of Christians. The Gospel, as we have seen, had been planted in that celebrated city by Paul himself, in the year 46; and there is respectable evidence, that Dionysius the Areopagite, who was certainly converted by the apostle, was intrusted by him with the care of the Athenian Church. However this may have been, Christianity continued to flourish in Athens; and Publius, the bishop of this see, is known to have suffered martyrdom in the course of the present century. His successor in the bishopric was Quadratus; and the same, or another person of that name, presented a written defence of Christianity to the Emperor Hadrian, on the occasion of his visiting Athens. Many of these Defences, or Apologies, as they are sometimes called, were written in the second and third centuries, with the view of explaining Christianity to the heathen, and refuting the calumnies which were spread against it. Some few of them are still extant, though that of Quadratus is lost, which is also the case with another Apology, presented to the same emperor by Aristides, who, before his conversion, had been an Athenian philosopher. We only know that Quadratus spoke of persons being alive in his own day who had been miraculously cured by our Saviour; and he is himself mentioned as possessing some portion of those preternatural gifts which were common in the apostolic age.

We have thus had abundant proof that the emperor's attention was turned to the religion of the Christians; but he was called upon to interfere still more decidedly, when Serenus Granius, the proconsul of Asia, who seems to have been a humane and equitable magistrate, wrote to him for instructions as to the mode of treating the Christians. The emperor's reply was addressed to Minucius Fundanus, the successor of Granius; and he expressly ordered that both parties, the accuser and the accused, should be heard openly before the tribunal; to which he added, that some positive violation of the laws must be proved before a Christian could be condemned to punishment. The letter also contained some strong expressions against wanton and malicious informers; so that, if provincial magistrates attended to the imperial edict, the condition of the Christians was likely to be much improved. But, though similar orders were sent into the provinces, there is too good reason to fear that they were generally disregarded.

The present decree was certainly more favourable to the Christians than that which Trajan had sent in answer to the application of Pliny. Such at least appears to have been its intention: but, although the emperor prohibited punishment, except in cases where some positive crime was alleged, it would not be difficult to construe Christianity itself into a violation of the laws; and there is no doubt that many magistrates acted upon this principle.

The emperor's own conduct in the different countries which he visited was calculated to support the national religion, and consequently to excite the people against the Christians. It at least showed that he was himself attached to the superstitions of heathenism; for wherever he went he allowed temples to be built in honour of himself. At the same time he furnished the Christians with powerful arguments against the religion which he professed. On one occasion of his visiting Egypt, he had the misfortune to lose his favourite, Antinous, who was drowned in the Nile; and, not content with building a city which bore his name, and perpetuating his memory in a variety of ways, he ordered divine honours to be paid to him, and placed him among the number of the gods. The Christians who wrote to defend their own religion, or to attack that of their opponents, could not fail to notice this irrational

and disgusting impiety; and the cause of Christianity was advanced by the follies and absurdities of those who attempted to suppress it.

We must now once more turn our attention to the melancholy history of the Jews. Indignant at the insults which they had received from Hadrian, they took advantage of his being no longer in their neighbourhood, and, about the year 132, broke out into open insurrection. Their leader was Bar-Cochab, which name implies *the son of a star*. He was a man in every way suited to command the energies of a desperate and fanatical people. The expectation of the Messiah, which had never subsided in Judæa, conspired with the hatred of the Romans, to give to this impostor an extraordinary influence with his countrymen. The contest, however, was hopeless from the beginning, though it was protracted for nearly four years. Jerusalem was no longer the important fortress, and was soon occupied by the Romans: but Bitthera, which lay between Jerusalem and the sea, held out for three years and a half against the forces of Severus, who was sent to quell the insurrection. When the city was taken the war was in fact ended. It was calculated that 580,000 Jews perished during the continuance of it; and we should naturally wish to inquire, in what degree this awful visitation was felt by that part of the nation which had embraced Christianity.

There is reason to think that the blow fell much more severely upon the unbelieving portion of the people. Not that the Christians were less attached to the land of their fathers, or more disposed to submit to the yoke of Rome: but Bar-Cochab raised the standard of religion as well as of liberty; his followers were required to acknowledge him as the expected deliverer, who was sent from heaven to redeem them; and it was impossible that any Christian could countenance such pretensions as these. The impostor was impolitic enough to persecute all those who opposed themselves to his wishes. We have it on the authority of a man who was himself obliged to fly the country, that the Christians were sentenced to horrid punishments if they would not deny that Jesus was the Christ, and utter blasphemy. There was therefore no want of patriotism, if the Christian inhabitants of Judæa looked upon the Romans as less objects of aversion and dread than their unbelieving countrymen. Many of

them sought refuge elsewhere, and those who remained probably continued neuter during the war. It is to be hoped that the Romans learnt from henceforth to distinguish more accurately between Jews and Christians; and this second taking of Jerusalem produced an important effect upon the church in that city.

The war was finished by the taking of Bitthera, in 135, and from that time no Jew was allowed to pay even a passing visit to Jerusalem. On one day only in the year was it lawful for them to approach their unhappy city. This was the day of its being taken by Titus. On the anniversary of that event the Jews might take a view of the walls for the space of one hour, but they might do no more, unless they purchased the indulgence for a settled sum. Though we know that this edict continued in force for a long period, it is also certain that there was a Christian church at Jerusalem after the reign of Hadrian, as well as before; and it is impossible to suppose that some members of it were not Jews by descent, though they had cast off their adherence to the Law of Moses; so that we might almost conclude that the prohibition of entering Jerusalem applied only to those Jews who had not embraced Christianity. It is said indeed, by Eusebius, that the church of Jerusalem (or rather of Ælia, which was the new name given to the city by Hadrian,) consisted from this time entirely of Gentiles, and that a Gentile bishop named Marcus was now appointed over them, the former fifteen bishops having been all of Jewish extraction. We may perhaps receive this statement concerning Marcus as correct, and it may have been a measure of prudence to elect a bishop who was not a Jew: but it is difficult to conceive that an entirely new body of Christians settled in the city after the war. What we know for certain is, that the church of Ælia continued to hold a conspicuous place among the Eastern churches, and its bishop was equal in rank with the bishops of the greatest sees, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria.

The Emperor Hadrian survived the Jewish war by three years, and died in 138. His reign, as we have seen, was not unfavourable to the Christians; and if his written instructions were generally acted upon in the provinces, it became less easy for their enemies to annoy them. It is certain, however, that the heathen were now beginning to persecute the

Christians more systematically and more cruelly than they had done in the first century. The rapid progress of Christianity was the cause of its being opposed thus violently; and its bitterest opponents were the persons whose livelihood depended upon the maintenance of heathen worship. The populace in every town were attached to the pomp and splendour of the sacrifices and public games, which seemed in danger of being stopped, if the simple religion of the Christians was adopted. The Romans had also introduced into every country a taste for the barbarous and bloody spectacles which were exhibited in the amphitheatre. Men were trained to fight with wild beasts, or criminals were condemned to be exposed to them as a punishment. It was easy to decide that Christianity was itself a crime, and thus to ensure a constant supply of criminals, whose shrieks and sufferings might amuse the spectators of the games. The unpopular or rapacious governor of a province had only to condemn a constant succession of Christians to the lions, and he ensured the attachment of the priests, as well as the applause of the multitude. This may sufficiently account for Christians being persecuted in various parts of the empire, without our looking for general edicts issued by the emperor, or for the emperor's personal interference in the subject. The name of Hadrian has been added, improperly, to the list of persecutors. The religion of the Christians was viewed by him with contempt, and the superstitions of paganism received his protection and encouragement: but it probably never struck him that his own creed was in danger of being supplanted by Christianity; and he saw the gross injustice of punishing men for their opinions when they were guilty of no crime.

The philosophers, as they were called, were greater enemies to the Gospel than any emperor or magistrate who had hitherto noticed it. They directed against it all the arguments which sophistry and sarcasm, combining with misrepresentation and ignorance, could invent. They took little trouble to learn what Christianity really was, and it suited their purpose to confound it with the absurdities and impieties of Gnosticism. The result was, that men whose lives were innocent and irreproachable were tortured and put to death as guilty of the most atrocious crimes. One of the most distinguished persons who wrote against Christianity was Celsus, a Platonic philo-

sopher, who lived in the days of Hadrian, and published a work entitled *The Word of Truth.* The work itself has long since perished, except a few fragments which have been preserved by Origen, who wrote a reply to it. Christianity has never shrunk from the attacks of its opponents. The more its doctrines have been investigated, the more plainly has their heavenly origin been demonstrated. The books which were written against it in the earlier ages, may have hastened the deaths of many individual Christians, and heathenism, for a time, enjoyed its triumph; but as soon as Christianity was attacked in writing, it not only defended itself, but turned upon its assailants. The apologies which were written in the second century contain most powerful and open exposures of the follies of paganism. The rich and the learned treated them with contempt, and the emperors appear to have paid little attention to them; but none ventured to answer them. Many of them have been preserved to our own day, and are well deserving of being read, as containing the sentiments of men who proved their belief in the Gospel by laying down their lives in its defence.

CHAPTER III.

ACCESSION OF ANTONINUS PIUS—VALENTINUS, CERDON, AND MARCION, GO TO ROME—SHEPHERD OF HERMAS, AND OTHER SPURIOUS WORKS—JUSTIN MARTYR—CAUSES OF PERSECUTION—PASCHAL CONTROVERSY—POLYCARP VISITS ROME—HEGESIPPUS.

We are now arrived at that period of history which has been described as the Age of the Antonines; a period which, in many respects, was memorable in the fortunes of the Roman Empire. Antoninus Pius, who had been adopted by Hadrian not long before his death, succeeded him as emperor in 138. His predecessor had passed so many years in foreign travel, that whatever opinions he had formed concerning Christianity must have been taken from his observations in distant countries. It is now time that we should look to the state of re-

ligion in the capital, the history of the Roman Church, during the second century, having occupied little of our attention. Our information on this point is extremely scanty. The names of the bishops of Rome have been preserved from the beginning; but the dates of their election and of their death have led to much discussion. It has also been asserted that many of them suffered martyrdom; and this could hardly have been the case, unless the Christians of Rome had been exposed to frequent and violent persecutions. There is, however, no authentic evidence of this; and there are strong grounds for concluding that none of the early Roman bishops met a violent death before the time of Telesphorus, who was martyred in the first year of Antoninus Pius. Even with respect to this event we have no authentic details; but it is not improbable that the games, and other solemnities which ushered in a new reign, gave a license to those persons who cherished hostility to the Gospel.

One fact seems certain with respect to the Church of Rome, and the remark may be extended to all the western churches, that Gnosticism had produced much less effect in this part of the world than it had done in the East. Unfortunately this freedom from the contagion of error was enjoyed no longer. It was during the first four years of the present reign, while Hyginus was bishop of Rome, that two of the most celebrated leaders of Gnosticism visited the capital. It may be stated generally, that this extraordinary delusion reached its height about the middle of the second century; and it was natural that persons who had met with such success in Asia and Egypt, should seek to extend their fame, and to make proselytes in the capital of the world. Accordingly, we are told that Valentinus and Cerdon arrived at Rome during the period mentioned above, or between the years 138 and 142. Valentinus had studied at Alexandria, and must have been, at one time, really or professedly, a Christian, if it be true that he had aspired to a bishopric. His chief celebrity arose from the new and fanciful arrangement which he made of those spiritual beings, or emanations, which were supposed to have proceeded from God. He also adopted, in its most irrational form, that early notion of the Gnostics, that the body of Jesus was an illusive phantom; and though some of the Gnostics may have been calumniated, as to the impurity of their moral practice,

there is no room for doubt that the Valentinians laid themselves open to this charge.

Cerdon, who came to Rome about the same period, had previously been teaching in Syria, and was principally distinguished for introducing the doctrine of two principles, the one of good, and the other of evil, which had been held for many ages in Persia. He was not, however, the first Gnostic who accounted for the origin of evil by some notion of this kind. It had already been adopted by Basilides; and the fame of Cerdon was so eclipsed by that of Marcion, who came to Rome a few years later, that it is not necessary to say anything more concerning him.

When Marcion came to Rome the bishopric was held by Pius, whose brother, Hermas, is supposed to have been the author of a work entitled "The Shepherd," which some have ascribed to the Hermas mentioned by St Paul. It is, however, much more probable that it was composed in the middle of the second century, which makes it an interesting work, on account of its antiquity, and it also contains many sentiments of piety and devotion; but it should be added, that these are mixed up with so much of puerility and mysticism, as to detract considerably from its value. It cannot now be ascertained whether it was intended at the time to pass for a work which was written by a companion of Paul; but it is certain that many spurious publications were circulated at this period, and later in the century, which professed to have been written by apostles, or companions of the apostles. These Gospels, or Acts, or Travels, or Revelations (for such were the titles which they commonly bore), may sometimes have preserved authentic traditions concerning our Lord and His disciples; but they were, for the most part, filled with improbable fictions: many of them were composed by Gnostics, and the contrast is very striking between the religious fidelity with which all the books of the New Testament have been preserved, and the total oblivion which has covered nearly all the spurious productions of the second and third centuries.

Though Marcion came to Rome while Pius was bishop, he rose to most celebrity there under his successor, Anicetus, who was appointed in 156. Marcion was a native of Pontus, and the son of a Christian bishop; but having been guilty of an act of gross immorality, he was expelled from the Church

by his own father, and eventually obliged to leave Asia. He then went to Rome, still calling himself a Christian, though it seems almost certain that he had already been suspected of heresy; and finding the Roman Christians unwilling to admit him, he threw himself at once into the party of Cerdon. From this time, the name of Marcion became most distinguished among the Gnostics; and he adopted that form of their creed which considered matter to be the cause of evil, and to form a second principle independent of God. He agreed entirely with Valentinus, in not believing the body of Jesus to have been real and substantial; and both of them retained to the last an attachment to the Gospel. Marcion admitted some of the books of the New Testament, but with alterations and mutilations; and though he is said to have received the Gospel of Luke, it was more properly a composition of his own, formed upon the basis of that Evangelist.

The most painful part of Marcion's history is his success in drawing away many of the Roman Christians to embrace his opinions. It is possible that some of his converts may have been led to abandon their faith by the terrors of persecution; for there is evidence that attacks of this kind were now becoming general in various parts of the world. A Defence or Apology is still extant, which was presented about the year 148 to the emperor, his two adopted sons, the senate and people of Rome, by Justin Martyr, in which the writer speaks of the Christians as being everywhere the objects of contempt and outrage. Justin was one of the most learned men who had hitherto taken up his pen in defence of the Gospel. He was a native of Samaria, and had made himself acquainted with all the different schools of philosophy, but that which gave him most satisfaction was the Platonic. His conversion to Christianity was principally owing to the constancy which he saw the Christians evince in the time of persecution; and he was himself obliged to leave his country on account of the revolt of the Jews under Bar-Cochab. He wrote several works beside the Apology mentioned above, some of which have come down to us, the most interesting being a second Apology, presented nearly twenty years later, and a Dialogue or Disputation with Trypho, a Jew.

It would be interesting to know whether Justin's present appeal to the emperor produced any effect in obtaining justice

for the Christians. We have already seen that their sufferings were not caused by direct orders from the government; and it is certain that Antoninus issued no edict against them. At some period of his reign he openly interfered in their favour, and wrote letters to different cities of Greece, commanding the persons in office to abstain from molesting the Christians. There is also a letter addressed to the cities of Asia Minor, in which the same instructions are given as to the treatment of the Christians; but it is uncertain whether his letter was written by the present emperor or by his successor. We may at least assume that Antoninus was not a persecutor in the common acceptation of that term, though he did not trouble himself as much as he was bound, to see that common justice, as well as his own special edicts, were executed by provincial magistrates. But if he went so far as to take measures for protecting the Christians in Greece and Asia, we might hope that he would not allow any open cruelties to be practised against them in the capital.

One remark may be made in this place concerning the altered state of public feeling towards the Christians at the present period, if compared with what it was at the first promulgation of the Gospel. It is certain that the new religion made more progress, at first, among the lower orders and the illiterate, than among the learned and the powerful. Except during times of excitement, such as was caused by a recurrence of the festivals, and by a numerous arrival of foreign Jews, the apostles and first preachers of Christianity were not unpopular with the poorer classes at Jerusalem. On more than one occasion the Jewish authorities were prevented from gratifying their malice against the rising sect, because they knew that the leaders of it were favourites with the people. This was natural, when miracles were worked every day, and almost every hour, in the public streets, and when the result of this miraculous power was especially beneficial to the poor. Miracles were the credentials offered by the apostles for the recommendation of their doctrines; and the effect of them was greater upon the uneducated, who were not accustomed to deep and laboured arguments, than upon men of learning, who complained that the Christians had no arguments to offer. The falsehood of this complaint became apparent as Christianity began to spread, and when God was gradually withdrawing from it that

miraculous support which it had needed at its first promulgation. The history of the second century is a proof that Christianity had no occasion, as indeed it had no intention, to shrink from argument. Though it could make no resistance with the sword, it became the assailant in the war of the pen; and it could no longer be said, as was the case a century before, that *not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called.* It was now raising its head from the obscurity which had marked its earlier progress; and the Age of the Antonines called forth much more learning in defence of Christianity than against it.

There were, however, as we have seen, many persons interested in the suppression of the new religion, who employed, as they imagined, more effectual weapons than those of learning and argument. The prison, the sword, and the wild beasts of the amphitheatre, supplied them with means of silencing the Christians. It was essential for such persons that they should have the populace on their side; and this was easily effected by raising the cry that the national religion was in danger of being destroyed. It is true that the rabble, in a Roman or Grecian town, cared little for religion; but they cared for the pleasure and amusement, as well as the more substantial enjoyment, which followed upon the exhibition of public sacrifices and games. There was in this respect a difference between the lower orders in heathen countries and in Judæa. The Jews were highly sensitive upon the point of the Law of Moses; but the unity of God was held by themselves as firmly as by the Christians, and their own prophets had taught them to look forward to the coming of Christ. The heathen, on the other hand, knew nothing of this argument from prophecy; and the unity of God was the very point which threatened their favourite superstitions with extinction. This will perhaps account for Christianity being less popular with the lower orders in heathen countries than it had been in Jerusalem. The heathen priests made the people their instruments in raising a cry against the Christians; and the philosophers, who were unable to defend their own impieties by argument, were glad to see their opponents silenced by any means, and none was so effectual as a general persecution. The miseries which the Christians suffered in the second century are to be attributed to these

causes, rather than to any special acts of the government. The latter would have taken effect in every part of the empire at the same time; whereas there are many instances of the Christians of one province, or city, being made the victims of popular fury, while their brethren in other countries were enjoying comparative tranquillity.

We have, perhaps, some proof of the Christians having a temporary respite from their enemies in both quarters of the world, when we find an Asiatic bishop undertaking so long a journey as to come to Rome upon a question purely o religion. This was the case with Polycarp, whose name is already familiar to the reader, as Bishop of Smyrna, and as having been personally acquainted with the Apostle John. He came to Rome about the year 158, when Anicetus was bishop of that see. The cause of his coming was a dispute between the eastern and western churches, concerning the Paschal Festival, which was kept by some of the Asiatic churches on the fourteenth day of the first month; and on the third day from this they kept the festival of the Resurrection, whether it fell upon a Sunday or no. This was, in fact, a compliance with the Jewish method of keeping the Passover. The western Christians, on the other hand, always kept the anniversary of the Resurrection on a Sunday; and on the day preceding they observed the Paschal Festival. Both parties laid claim to apostolical authority. The eastern Christians asserted that John and Philip had sanctioned the custom, which was still preserved in Asia, while their brethren at Rome defended themselves by the authority of Peter and Paul; and the disputes which arose upon this question, which now appears of little importance, were carried on for a long time with much animosity.

It was in the hope of putting an end to these divisions, that Polycarp undertook, at his advanced age, to visit the capital of the empire, and to have a conference with Anicetus upon the subject. Though neither of the two bishops was able to convince the other, it is pleasing to read that they maintained their separate opinions with the most perfect amity and goodwill. It also acquaints us with the religious customs of the time, when we find them receiving the sacrament of bread and wine together; and the bishop of Rome, though it was in his own city and his own church, allowing the bishop of Smyrna

to consecrate the elements. We may well conceive that he paid this respect to Polycarp in deference to his venerable age, and to his character of an apostolical bishop. From the nature of the case, it is not likely that many persons were then living, certainly not many bishops, who had seen and conversed with an apostle; and the presence of Polycarp must have been considered as a blessing to any church which he chanced to visit. The Roman Christians were at this time in greater want of assistance and direction in matters of faith than at any former period. Gnosticism, as we have seen, had seduced many from the truth; and though there is no reason to think that Anicetus was deficient in activity and zeal, it was not perhaps to be expected that he could singly protect his flock from such insidious and skilful assailants as Valentinus and Marcion. The arrival of Polycarp was therefore seasonable. His own city, Smyrna, had been exposed to danger from the Gnostics before the end of the first century; and the whole of his long life had been passed in endeavouring to protect his fold from these grievous wolves. When he came to Rome, he found that the enemy had preceded him; and we have the best authority for saying that he succeeded in bringing back many of the Roman Christians from their unfortunate delusion.

Another person who came to Rome while Anicetus was bishop was Hegesippus; and, if his writings had come down to us, we might have been led to say more concerning him as the earliest ecclesiastical historian. But the work which he wrote in five books is lost, and we only know that he spoke with great satisfaction of the uniformity of faith which he found in all the churches which he visited on his way to Rome. He may perhaps have arrived in the capital during the reign of M. Aurelius, for Anicetus held the bishopric for twelve years, from 156 to 168; and Antoninus Pius died in 161. Hegesippus appears to have continued in Rome for twenty years longer, and made out a list of the bishops of that see, which shows the interest already begun to be taken in all matters relating to the History of the Church.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCESSION OF M. AURELIUS—PERSECUTION—DEATH OF JUSTIN MARTYR—TATIAN THE ASSYRIAN—SECT OF THE ENCRATITES—CHURCH OF ATHENS—APOLOGY OF ATHENAGORAS—CHARITY OF THE CHRISTIANS—MARTYRDOM OF PAPIAS—BELIEF IN A MILLENNIUM—MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP—LEARNING OF THE CHRISTIANS—MONTANISM—MIRACULOUS SHOWER OF RAIN—PERSECUTION AT LYONS—IRENÆUS—DEATH OF M. AURELIUS.

THE second of the Antonines, who is better known by his other name of Marcus Aurelius, began his reign in 161. Uniting the character of a Stoic philosopher to that of a statesman and a soldier, he was more likely to notice Christianity, and perhaps we should add, that he was more likely to view it with contempt, if not with stronger feelings. It is undoubtedly true that the condition of the Christians became much worse in all parts of the empire during the present reign than it had been before; and it is difficult to acquit the emperor of being in some measure the cause of it. It has been stated that a letter was written, either by his predecessor or himself, to the cities of Asia Minor, which was decidedly favourable to the Christians; and if it is to be ascribed to M. Aurelius, it was probably written at the very beginning of his reign, before he had imbibed any feelings of prejudice against them. The cities of Asia Minor had applied to the emperor for leave to punish the Christians; and one of their pleas was the alarming succession of earthquakes, by which the gods were showing their dislike to the new religion. It was argued that the extinction of Christianity would appease the wrath of heaven; but the emperor saw through the cruelty and injustice of the petition: he referred in his answer to the edicts of his predecessors, which required a Christian to be convicted of a criminal offence before he could be punished; and he concluded his letter by saying, that if any one proceeded against another merely for being a Christian, the Christian should be acquitted, even if he avowed his belief, and the accusing party should be punished.

Notwithstanding this favourable edict, it is certain that the

Christians were exposed to severe persecution, even in Rome, at the beginning of the present reign. A second Apology was presented to the emperor by Justin Martyr, between the years 161 and 165, from which we learn that Urbicus, who commanded the prætorian guards, put several persons to death, merely because they were Christians; and others were victims to the malice of Crescens, a Cynic philosopher. Justin himself did not long survive this second defence. There was a law which made it a capital crime for any one to refuse to take part in a sacrifice to the gods, or to swear by the name of the emperor. It was, of course, impossible for a Christian to comply with the former, and the latter was considered a religious ceremony, to which he had equal objections. This was henceforth found the most convenient mode of harassing the Christians; and Justin, with many other companions, was first scourged and afterwards beheaded, about the year 165.

The name of Martyr has always been peculiarly applied to this excellent and distinguished man; and it was about this time that it came to be restricted to those who had actually suffered death for sake of the Gospel. Hitherto it had been applied to all persons who suffered for their religion, though they were not called upon to lay down their lives; but as the work of persecution increased, a distinction was made between those who bore testimony unto death, and those who only suffered imprisonment or tortures. The latter were called confessors, and those only who died for the truth were spoken of as martyrs; and it was probably the high character which Justin bore as a man of learning, as well as his firmness and intrepidity in suffering, which gained for him the permanent distinction of bearing the surname of Martyr.

His long residence in Rome could not fail to be of great service to the Christians in that city; and he left behind him a pupil who, like his master, was well able to defend his opinions against the philosophers of the day. This was Tatian, who was an Assyrian by birth, and was converted to Christianity by reading the books of the Old Testament. Only one of his works has come down to us, entitled *An Oration against the Greeks*, in which he openly and unsparingly attacks the religion of the heathen. He probably left Rome upon the death of Justin, having been a sufferer in the same

persecution; and it is painful to find him falling into heresy, when he lost the example and guidance of his master. He adopted the Gnostic errors of Valentinus and Marcion; and, some years later, he became the head of a party which, from following rigid rules of continence and privation, obtained the name of Encratites. It has been stated that one branch of the Gnostics had been distinguished for practising these austerities; but Tatian, who took up his residence in Antioch, appears to have carried them still further, and to have reduced them more to a system.

The Encratites continued as a sect for a long period; but it would be incorrect to suppose that all persons who practised self-privations and austerities were included in the sect, or considered heretical. There appear to have been always Christians, and particularly in Egypt, who thought it right to mortify the body by abstinence from certain kinds of food, and who discouraged, if they did not actually prohibit, marriage. The Church had not as yet given any decision upon these points, and persons were allowed to follow their own inclinations without interfering with each other; but it was, perhaps, natural that each party should proceed to censure the other, as if it was in error, not upon a matter of indifference, but upon a question of vital importance to religion. There can be no doubt that the progress of Gnosticism had an influence in this respect, upon many persons who still considered themselves members of the orthodox Church. A Christian might have agreed with a Gnostic in his rules of rigid mortification, though he may have kept himself entirely free from errors of belief; and when Tatian and his followers came to be classed among heretics, it was perhaps owing to their adoption of the Gnostic doctrines, rather than to the peculiar mode of life which they chose to follow.

A person named Severus succeeded Tatian as head of the Encratites, who became so decidedly heretical as to reject the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of Paul. Tatian was also the author of a *Harmony of the Four Gospels;* but, having adopted the Gnostic notion of Christ not having really assumed a human body, he omitted those parts which opposed this extravagant theory. Notwithstanding this omission, it is much to be regretted that Tatian's *Harmony* has not come down to

us, which would have set the question at rest, whether the Four Gospels were at this time generally received by the Church. The mere fact of such a work having been composed is sufficient to decide this question in the affirmative; nor can there be any doubt upon the subject, to persons who will study impartially the writings of the second century. Justin Martyr expressly refers to the Four Gospels, and quotes passages from them; and they must have been in general circulation at that period, or Tatian would not have undertaken to arrange the different narratives in one connected history. The chronology of the various events recorded by the four evangelists would, perhaps, have been less uncertain, if we could have seen the opinion of a writer whose date is so little removed from the age of the apostles.

The same scenes of cruelty which had caused the death of Justin, and had driven Tatian from Rome, were acted at this period in various parts of the empire. The churches of Greece did not escape, and Publius, bishop of Athens, suffered martyrdom. The persecution was so hot in that city, that many Christians abandoned their faith; and we have a pleasing picture of the friendly intercourse which took place between different churches, when we find Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, writing to the Athenians to encourage them in standing firm. His exhortation was not thrown away; and when the vacancy caused by the death of Publius was filled up by Quadratus, (who was perhaps the same person that presented his Apology to Hadrian,) the faith and constancy of the Athenian Christians revived. Athens was not the only city which received proofs of the paternal solicitude of Dionysius. This excellent and learned bishop wrote letters to several other churches, either exhorting them to unity, or guarding them against Gnostic errors; but unhappily none of them have been preserved, and we only know from the titles of them, that there were churches in Sparta, Nicomedia, Pontus, and in more than one city of Crete.

It was either now, or about ten years later, that an Athenian philosopher named Athenagoras addressed a work to the emperor, which he called an Embassy in behalf of the Christians; and at the time of his writing it, not only were the most horrid calumnies circulated against them, but they were brought before the governors of provinces in such

numbers, that these officers were unequal to the task of hearing the cases. In the midst of all this suffering, the charity of the Christians shone conspicuous, as in those early days when the believers were of one heart and one soul. Even heathen writers were struck with the remarkable fact of the Christians in one country sending relief to their brethren in others. For this purpose it was usual, as in the time of the apostles, for a public fund to be raised, the distribution of which was at the disposal of the bishop; and if Christians had been shipwrecked, banished to the islands, condemned to work in the mines, or thrown into prison, relief was afforded to them from this common fund. The Roman Church is particularly mentioned, as having kept up this charitable custom from very early times; and when Soter was bishop of that see, which he held from 168 to 173, the liberality of himself and his flock was acknowledged in a letter from Dionysius, who still occupied the see of Corinth. We also learn that a letter of Soter, to which this was a reply, was read publicly in the Corinthian churches on Sundays, which was still the case with the letter written so many years before by Clement.

When we are considering the causes which led to the rapid spread of Christianity in the second century, the charity of the Christians is perhaps not to be omitted; nor can it be fairly urged that the increase in the number of believers becomes less wonderful, even if some of them were attracted to the Gospel by interested motives. The new religion must have brought forth the fruits of charity to a considerable extent, before it would have engaged the attention of the heathen merely on that account; and though there may be nothing wonderful in men professing to embrace a religion which held out to them worldly advantages, yet the persons who gave up their property for the relief of others could only have been influenced by motives of religion: and if we study the human heart, or the history of all former religions (except that of the Jews, which also came from God), we must allow that a system of charity, like that which was established by the Christians, was in the highest degree wonderful and unprecedented. It will at least be conceded that the heathen, who embraced Christianity in the hope of pecuniary profit, had observed greater instances of liberality on the part of the

Christians than of the heathen; and a comparison between the two religions could not fail to lead to such a conclusion; but there is no occasion to suppose that many of those who were converted by observing the charity of the Christians, were influenced by interested motives: this at least could only have been the case with the poor; those who were not in want, and who had superfluous wealth of their own, could have had no selfish motive in embracing a religion which required them to part with this superfluity.

The charity of the Christians may have been the first attraction which led these persons to become believers, but it was because they could not help admiring and loving a religion which produced such heavenly fruits. Such motives for conversion were perfectly natural, and wholly unconnected with selfishness. Heathenism had failed to make men charitable, but Christianity, on its very first appearance, produced this effect. We cannot therefore wonder if the system which was the most amiable, was also the most attractive; and this, as was observed above, may have been one of the causes which led to the wide and rapid propagation of the new religion.

But it was not merely by making a provision for their poorer members, that the Christians obtained commendation even from their enemies. In times of public suffering, such as a contagious sickness or plague, it was observed that Christians attended upon the sick and the dying with the most affectionate and heroical constancy. The fear of death appeared to be no restraint to them in these acts of mutual kindness; whereas every writer who has described the ravages of any pestilential disease among the ancients, has noticed among the melancholy effects of such visitations, that they seemed to steel the heart against the tenderest and most natural affections; and that men became more hard-hearted, and more regardless of the future, by seeing death on every side, and by expecting it to come shortly to themselves. The persons thus described were heathens; and when a Christian was seen to devote himself to a friend who was infected with pestilence, and perhaps to fall a victim to his own disinterested kindness, the spectacle was one which the world had not hitherto witnessed.

The present reign afforded an opportunity for such instances

to be frequently repeated; for the soldiers who returned from the Parthian campaign of the Emperor Verus, brought back with them a pestilential disease of great malignity, which continued for several years. The celebrated physician, Galen, was living at this period; and he has left some remarks upon the firmness or the obstinacy with which the Christians submitted to any suffering, rather than abandon their religion. It was thus that the heathen chose to speak of the fortitude of the Christians, which they could not help admiring, though they professed to treat it with contempt; and we have seen that pestilence was only one among many trials which at this period exercised the patient endurance of the Christians.

If we now turn our eyes to the eastern part of the empire we shall find still stronger indications of suffering, particularly in Asia Minor; and the blow appears to have been generally struck at the heads of the Church. We shall see the venerable Polycarp receiving at length his crown of martyrdom; but his death was preceded by that of another bishop, who had either been personally acquainted with John, or had seen persons who had conversed with several of the apostles. This was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia. He was a man of extensive reading, but apparently not of strong judgment. Notwithstanding this defect, a work which he wrote, containing a collection of anecdotes and sayings connected with our Lord and His apostles, would have been extremely interesting if it had come down to us. He is generally mentioned as the first Christian writer who maintained the doctrine of a Millennium, or who held that, previous to the final judgment, there would be a resurrection of the just, who would reign with Christ upon earth for a thousand years. Such a belief was certainly entertained by several writers of the second century, though Justin, who himself adopted it, acknowledges that there were many Christians of sound and religious minds who differed from him on this point. It was, in fact, never made an article of belief, and each person was at liberty to follow his own opinion; beside which, we must carefully distinguish between the notion of a Millennium entertained by Papias and the earlier writers, and that which has been ascribed to Cerinthus and other Gnostics. The Cerinthians have always been charged with having very gross and sensual views concerning the happiness of the saints during this reign

of Christ upon earth; but Papias and his followers admitted no such impurities into their creed; and we shall see that during the third century, this belief in a Millennium gradually died away.

Papias suffered martyrdom in 163, having been taken from his own city to Pergamos for that purpose. It is to be feared that the sufferings of his flock did not cease with his death, for his successor, Abercius, presented an apology to the emperor, as did also Apollinarius, who held the same bishopric in 168, if not earlier. Both these compositions are lost, which is unfortunately the case with all the other works of Apollinarius, who was an author of much celebrity, and entered into all the religious controversies of his day.

Severe as were the sufferings of all these confessors and martyrs, they sink comparatively into the shade while we read of the aged and apostolical Polycarp being burnt to death in the amphitheatre of Smyrna. This event probably happened in the year 167. The proconsul Quadratus, affecting to have compassion upon his age, held out the hopes of pardon if he would utter imprecations against Christ; to which the old man made no other reply than, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" It was intended that he should be exposed to wild beasts; but it being too late in the day for such a spectacle when he was dragged into the amphitheatre, it was decided that he should be burnt. A fire was soon kindled, and the Jews were observed to assist the heathen in this work of cruelty; but when, from some cause or other, the flames delayed to consume the body, an executioner pierced it through with a sword, and put an end to the martyr's sufferings. We have another proof of the intercourse kept up between different churches, when we find a detailed account of Polycarp's death drawn up by the Christians of Smyrna, and copies of it sent to the neighbouring places. The letter is still extant; and it adds a remarkable instance of the persevering hostility of the Jews, that, not satisfied with having assisted in burning Polycarp, they advised the proconsul not to let the Christians take the body, lest they should proceed to give up Jesus, and worship Polycarp. The Jews were therefore well aware that Jesus was an object of religious worship to the Christians · but the writers of the

letter add the remark, that the case anticipated by the Jews was perfectly impossible: Jesus, they observe, and Jesus only, could be the object of their worship; to Him, as the Son of God, they offered adoration: but the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, were merely objects of gratitude and love.

The proconsul allowed the bones of Polycarp to be carried away by his friends; and we learn from this letter that the custom already existed of meetings being held at the graves of the martyrs; and on the anniversary of their death, which was called their birth-day, the Christians assembled to commemorate their history. The service resembled that of the Sunday. The Lord's Supper was eaten; collections were made for the poor; and the acts of the martyr, whose death was being commemorated, were publicly read.

The death of Polycarp had the effect for a short time of checking the persecution in Smyrna; but it must have revived shortly after, since Papirius, who succeeded to the bishopric, suffered martyrdom; and Thraseas, bishop of Eumenia, met the same fate at Smyrna in this or the following reign. The neighbouring city of Laodicea saw its bishop, Sagaris, publicly put to death: and we may close this melancholy account by noticing another Apology, addressed to M. Aurelius by Melito, bishop of Sardes. He was a man of considerable learning, and author of several works, all of which have perished: but we learn from a fragment of his Apology, that he did not charge the emperor himself with sanctioning such cruel proceedings; and it is also inferred from his expressions, that persons were induced to accuse the Christians by having their property adjudged to them in case of conviction.

The reader will long since have ceased to feel surprise at finding Christians spoken of as men of learning. The works which have come down to us from Christian writers of the second and third centuries, are far more numerous than those of the heathen. The names of several apologists have already been mentioned, who did not fear to address their petitions to emperors and magistrates, though they exposed the superstitions of these very persons as fabulous and absurd. Others defended their brethren from the errors of Gnosticism; and Theophilus, who became bishop of Antioch in 168, would

have been eminent as a philosopher if he had not been converted to the Gospel. One of his works, which he addressed to a heathen friend, named Autolycus, has come down to us; and in another, which he published against Hermogenes, he entered into the question which had so long employed the heathen philosophers, concerning the eternity of matter.

The Gnostics, as we have seen, contributed to keep up the agitation of this perplexing subject; and whatever other differences they may have had, they all agreed in believing that the elements of matter had not been created by God, but had existed, like God Himself, from all eternity. It is a remarkable fact, that no philosopher or writer of any school, before the appearance of Christianity, ever conceived the idea of God having made the world out of nothing; but wherever the Gospel was received, this fundamental truth was also recognised, and the eternity of matter became, as it deserved to be, an exploded doctrine which cannot consist with a sound and rational belief in the omnipotence of God. We need not, however, be surprised if some persons professing themselves Christians, endeavoured to unite the ancient notion with this new creed; and Hermogenes, who called himself a Stoic, appears to have been one of this class, though the name of Christian can hardly be applied to him, except as the leading points of Christianity entered, under some form or other, into every scheme of Gnosticism. He did not deny that matter could have been created out of nothing: but he held that God would not have created it, because it is the source of all evil. He also believed that the evil spirits, and even the human soul, had their origin from matter; and his speculations probably made a considerable sensation, and were considered dangerous to the Christians, since a bishop of Antioch undertook to refute them; and Tertullian, later in the century, also exercised his pen in exposing their mischievous tendency. The work of the latter writer is still extant, but that of Theophilus has not come down to us.

Though the Christians were suffering so severely from persecution at this period, the bishops and men of learning among them were forced to direct their attention to another subject, which was now becoming of some importance. The heresy which bore the name of Montanism, began about the middle of the second century, and had its name from Mon-

tanus, who first made himself known in a village of Mysia, not far from the borders of Phrygia, from whence the sect which he founded was frequently called the Phrygian, or Cataphrygian. Montanus had been recently converted to Christianity, and was perhaps not so much an impostor, as led away by a fanciful and heated imagination. He appeared subject to trances or ecstasies; and two ladies of rank, Priscilla and Maximilla, were persuaded by him to leave their husbands, and to follow him about as prophetesses. It was this pretence to inspiration which formed the peculiar character of the sect; for the Montanists were not accused of being heretical upon any vital point of religion; and though Montanus has been charged with the blasphemy of calling himself the Paraclete, it seems certain that he only meant to say, that the Holy Ghost, or Paraclete, had given to him and his followers, an extraordinary measure of spiritual illumination.

There can be no doubt that the Montanists laid claim to this distinction; and boasted, in virtue of their inspiration, not only to have a clearer insight into the mysteries of revelation, but to be specially gifted with the power of looking into futurity. This may account in some degree for the strong measures which were taken by the heads of the Church to repress these enthusiasts, and to expel them from their communion: for the Montanists were not satisfied with assuming to themselves, in a peculiar and exclusive sense, the title of *spiritual*, but they spoke of all persons who denied their pretensions, as if they were devoid of the Spirit, and were living in a natural or unregenerate state. Offensive epithets of this kind are always causes of irritation; and they were likely to be particularly so when used by the Montanists, whose tenets were confessedly of a recent date, and who were in a decided minority. Calumnies were spread against them in later times, as if they practised some horrid and mysterious cruelties in their religious meetings; but there is no reason to think that such stories had any foundation in truth. The objections were much more just which were brought against the Montanists, for their extreme severity in punishing the heavier offences. A rigid system of self-mortification seemed to harden them against all notions of forgiveness: to obtain safety by flight, in the time of persecution, was pronounced by them unlawful; and though we may acquit them of heresy in

point of doctrine, it is scarcely possible not to convict them of enthusiasm.

A belief in the extravagant pretensions of Montanus spread rapidly in Asia Minor, particularly among the lower orders; and the bishops tried in vain to preserve their flocks from the contagion. Several writers in various parts of the world, published treatises against it; but whatever advantage they may have had in argument, they could not hinder the severe principles of Montanus from being very generally adopted. The sect of the Encratites, which has been already mentioned, agreed with the Montanists in this particular; and it was perhaps natural, that persons who had witnessed, and even joined in the gross immoralities of the heathen, should go to the extreme of abstinence and self-denial when they became converted to the Gospel. There is no doubt that many persons who were not called Montanists, and who held high stations in the Church, imposed upon themselves a more rigid discipline than was thought necessary by the generality of Christians. The notion now began to be entertained that second marriages were not lawful. It was strongly urged that Christians ought not to be present at the games of the circus and amphitheatre; not that such amusements were considered in themselves to be sinful, but a spectator of them could not fail to witness many acts of Pagan superstition, and in some measure to take a part in them. The same feeling began now to operate in making Christians have scruples as to serving in the army; not that they looked upon war as unlawful, but almost every act of a soldier's life was closely interwoven with the national religion: and we know from the apologists of Christianity, that the legions had for some time been filled with Christians. Their numbers had now increased so prodigiously, that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to carry on a campaign, if the army had been manned exclusively by heathens; and if many Christians had acted upon the principles of the Montanists, and been led by scruples of religion to quit the service, their loss would have been very seriously felt by the empire at large. Notwithstanding the arguments which were urged by the more rigid party, it seems however certain, that Christians still continued to serve in the army; and though we cannot condemn the feeling which looked upon all the religious rites of Paganism

with horror, there is evidence that this new scruple was only a source of fresh sufferings to the Christians. If they left the service, or refused to take part in any public ceremony, it was easy to represent them as disaffected to the emperor, or the empire; and every recurrence of a military spectacle, which happened frequently both in the capital and the provincial towns, was sure to be attended with insults, if not more serious injuries being offered to the Christians.

If we ask for any one cause which led the heathen in every part of the world to persecute the Christians, we need not look beyond the rapid increase of Christianity; but there were circumstances of a local or temporary nature, which frequently exposed them to insults and outrages. If any national calamity befell the country, it was attributed to the anger of the gods, who were indignant at the toleration of a new religion. An earthquake, a famine, or a pestilence, could only be removed by the shedding of Christian blood. If the Tiber happened to overflow its banks, or if the Nile did not rise to its usual height, in either case the Christians were considered the guilty cause; and the rabble of Rome or Alexandria were accordingly amused with an exhibition of Christians and wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The present reign furnished instances of this kind. Lucius Verus, who was associated with M. Aurelius in the empire, returned from his Parthian campaigns in 165; and the soldiers, as has been already observed, brought back a pestilential disorder of great malignity, which continued several years. Notwithstanding this visitation, the two emperors celebrated their triumphs for the victories of Verus in the following year; and such occasions always gave a license for insults to the Christians. In 169, the two emperors left Rome to make war with the German tribes, which were becoming formidable by their invasions. The terror which these barbarians excited, had caused the priests to recommend some extraordinary means for obtaining the favour of heaven; and since this same year was marked by an inundation of the Tiber, we may be sure that it was a season of severe trial to the Christians of Rome.

All these religious precautions were ineffectual in behalf of one of the emperors. Verus died before the campaign had begun; and his colleague, who returned to Rome in consequence, was again very active in restoring the worship of the

gods. At length, in 170, he resumed the expedition, and did not revisit his capital for several years; so that, if the Roman Christians were persecuted during the interval, it can hardly be laid to the charge of the emperor. It was during this German war, that he is said to have issued an edict, that any person who was brought to trial merely for being a Christian should be acquitted, and his accuser should be burnt to death; but there are strong grounds for supposing that the letter containing this order is a forgery. If we might believe contemporary writers, he was moved to extend this protection to the Christians, by having received the benefit of their prayers, when the army was suffering from thirst, and the Christian soldiers kneeling down, obtained a shower of rain. That the army was unexpectedly relieved in this manner during a war with the Quadi, in 174, can hardly be doubted, for it is mentioned by heathen authors, who ascribe the shower of rain either to a magician, or to the prayers of the emperor: but if there were any Christians in the army, it seems not only probable, but certain, that they would pray to God in their distress; and when the rain came down, they could hardly fail to feel grateful that their prayers had been heard.

This is, perhaps, the simple account of an event which, in ancient and modern times, has been considered miraculous: nor is there any superstition or credulity in supposing that the prayer of faith prevailed for the preservation of the army; but that these Christian soldiers belonged to a legion, which was henceforward called the "thundering legion," or that the emperor acknowledged their services in the letter mentioned above, are stories which do not rest on any sufficient evidence.

If the emperor had issued such an edict, the Christians would have met with very different treatment during the remainder of his reign; but it is plain that his mind continued unchanged with respect to their religion. Had it been otherwise, he would have found an additional reason for favouring them in the following year, when Avidius Cassius headed an insurrection in Syria. The emperor set out immediately to quell it; and though his opponent was defeated and killed before the imperial forces had sailed from Italy, he still continued his design of going in person to the scene of the late rebellion. It was remarked, that no Christian had joined

the party of Cassius, which ought perhaps to have inclined the emperor to treat them more kindly; but we must not infer from this fact, that the Christians, as a body, felt any personal attachment to M. Aurelius. They had, from the first, been censured by the heathen for indolence and indifference as to public affairs: and there were many reasons why they should not interfere in political commotions. As far as their lives and liberties were concerned, they had no more reason to expect protection from one competitor for the throne, than from another: but being already accused of disaffection to the government, they had at least an inducement to remain quiet. This will perhaps explain why no Christian had joined the party of Cassius.

It has been already observed that some of them may have objected, on religious grounds, to conform to the duties of a soldier; but this was certainly not the case universally: the armies were at this time filled with Christians; and religious scruples were not much felt on this head, till the rigid doctrines of Montanus had spread more widely at the end of the century. It may however, be received as a fact, whatever was the cause of it, that no Christian was punished by order of the emperor, for having taken part in the rebellion. The Christians themselves would be aware of this circumstance; but it does not follow that any public notice was taken of it. Had the fact been otherwise, their condition might have been still worse; but, as it was, their loyalty or their neutrality gained for them no advantage.

It was observed above, that the rapid growth of Christianity was a principal cause of its being persecuted; and there never was a more signal instance of failure, than when the heathen thought to impede its progress by measures of violence. There is abundant evidence that during the whole of the second century it was advancing rapidly. Justin Martyr spoke of the religion of Christ having reached the remotest regions; and Bardesanes, who wrote a few years later, and was himself a native of Mesopotamia, mentioned by name the Persians, the Medes, the Parthians and the Bactrians, as having already received the Gospel.

Mesopotamia contained the ancient and flourishing church at Edessa, which has been supposed to have been founded in the first century; and more than one of its sovereigns (all

of whom appear to have borne the name of Abgarus) are mentioned as being converted to the Gospel. But its most distinguished member (at least, in the present century) was Bardesanes, who has been lately quoted as asserting the extensive progress of Christianity in the East. His writings in defence of it became very celebrated, and he attracted the notice of Apollonius, the Stoic philosopher, whose reputation stood so high that M. Aurelius attended his school even after he was emperor. Apollonius is known to have accompanied L. Verus when he went into the East in 161, and he may have met with Bardesanes while he was in that country. The philosopher used every argument to make him give up Christianity but to no purpose; Bardesanes showed great firmness as well as courage in defending his religious belief, and for some time he was equally zealous in refuting the heresies which were then infecting his countrymen. One of his many publications was directed against Marcion, but unfortunately he did not always continue sound in his religious opinions. He is generally classed among those persons who held the Oriental doctrine of two principles; and he so far agreed with the Valentinian Gnostics as to deny the resurrection of the body, and to believe Jesus to have been an incorporeal phantom. In some points, however, he differed materially from Valentinus, and perhaps there was no time when he did not call himself a Christian; but his speculations upon the origin of matter, and of evil, led him into some peculiar notions, which have caused him to be classed with the precursors of Manicheeism. Some of his errors were abjured by him before he died, though not the whole of them, and he does not appear to have been looked upon as so decidedly heretical as many others of the Gnostic school.

The history of this man, as well as the passage quoted from his writings, is a proof that Christianity had penetrated into the interior of Asia.

It had been conveyed to Egypt at a still earlier period; and though we cannot fix the date of the foundation of the Church of Carthage, it certainly existed before the end of the second century. If we turn to the west of Europe, though it is uncertain whether Gaul and Spain were visited by any of the apostles, there are traces of churches being planted there in very early times. Even the remote island of Britain contained

many Christians in the time of M. Aurelius. Germany is expressly mentioned as being similarly circumstanced; and the period at which we are now arrived will present a melancholy proof that Christianity was flourishing in the south of France.

There are many traces of a connexion having existed between the Christians in that part of the world and those of Asia Minor. It has been supposed that Polycarp sent missionaries into Gaul; but at whatever time this intercourse began, it is certain that churches were regularly established there before 177. It was in this year that the two cities of Lyons and Vienne witnessed a severe and bloody persecution of the Christians, a detailed account of which is still extant, in a letter addressed to their brethren of Asia Minor. The storm had been gathering for some time, and at first the Christians were forbidden to frequent the public baths, or even to show themselves. This was soon followed by imprisonments and deaths. As many as confessed themselves to be Christians were ordered for execution, and the amphitheatre was soon surfeited with victims. The venerable Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, who was now upwards of ninety years of age, fell a sacrifice to these barbarities. The number of prisoners became so great, that the governor wrote to the emperor to know how they were to be treated; and if the answer was dictated by the emperor himself, we have too plain a proof that his heart was steeled against the Christians. It was ordered that all who confessed themselves to be of that religion should be put to the torture, and the work of cruelty was resumed with more activity than before. As many as were citizens of Rome had the distinction of being beheaded; the rest were exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, and their mangled remains were thrown into the river that they might not receive interment from their friends!

While the governor was sending to Rome for his instructions, the unhappy people whom he was tormenting had the calmness to take the same opportunity of sending some of their own body to the capital. But it was not to supplicate the emperor for mercy. They had heard of the dissensions which the opinions of Montanus had raised, and they were anxious, if they could, to bring the parties to agreement. A

letter was also written to Eleutherus, who at that time was bishop of Rome; and it is said to have contained an exhortation to peace, though the particular subject of it is not mentioned. It may have alluded to the doctrines of Montanus, or to the controversy which was still carried on concerning the feast of Easter; but what a beautiful picture does this give us of the Gospel, when men, whose lives were hourly in danger, could thus forget their own sufferings, and exhort their brethren to maintain the bond of peace!

The letter to Eleutherus was carried by Irenæus, who was at this time a presbyter in the Church of Lyons, and had enjoyed the advantage, when very young, of receiving instruction from Polycarp. His absence from Lyons at this critical time perhaps saved his life; and his visit to Rome enabled him to become better acquainted with the doctrines of the Gnostics. It is uncertain whether he found Valentinus and Marcion still residing in Rome. But Marcion, if not Valentinus also, lived till the time of Eleutherus; and after what we have heard of their doctrines, it will seem strange that both of them not only solicited but obtained re-admission into the church. Even after a second expulsion, they were again received to communion; and Marcion, upon one of these occasions, contributed a large sum to the fund which was raised from charity. It was as honourable to Eleutherus as to the body over whom he presided, that when it was again found necessary to expel Marcion from the church, his money was returned to him; and if he was sincere in making still another overture for re-admission, he was hindered by death from proving his sincerity.

If these leaders of the Gnostics were dead when Irenæus arrived at Rome, there were still many persons residing there who had imbibed their tenets. One of them, Florinus, had been known before to Irenæus, when both of them were hearers of Polycarp in Asia; since which time he had been ordained a presbyter in the Roman Church, and had been ejected for heresy. On some points his opinions were peculiar, and he differed from the Gnostics in believing God to be the author of evil, but in others he resembled them; and Irenæus published a work against him. It is even said that the still greater work which he composed a few years later, and in which the whole system of Gnosticism was

exposed and confuted, was undertaken in consequence of the sorrow which he felt at seeing his former friend betrayed into such a fatal error. Irenæus also wrote to another person whom he had met at Rome, named Blastus, on the subject of schism; but these letters were probably written after he had quitted Rome, and when he was advanced to a higher station in the church. When he returned to Lyons, he found the church in that city deprived of its head by the martyrdom of Pothinus; and we may now understand why Irenæus had been fixed upon to carry the letter which had been addressed to the bishop of Rome. It is plain that he was considered a leading member of his church; and he had no sooner returned from his mission than he was himself elected to fill the vacant bishopric. His future conduct amply justified the choice. On a future occasion we shall see him once more in communication with the bishop of Rome, recommending measures of peace; and he left behind him a monument of theological learning, which has given him an eminent station among the Fathers of the church. This was the work alluded to above, in which he exposed the errors and impieties of that fanciful school which had seduced his former friend, Florinus. It was entitled *A Refutation of Knowledge, falsely so called;* and we may judge of the necessity which there was for men of learning to publish works of this kind, when we find Irenæus complaining that the Gnostic doctrines were embraced by some females even in the distant country w ich was watered by the Rhone. It is to be regretted that so valuable a work exists only in an old Latin translation, the original having been composed in Greek, which was the native language of Irenæus before he passed from Asia into Gaul.

We may hope that the fury of persecution was exhausted before the Christians of Lyons were committed to the care of Irenæus, though there is evidence that it had by no means subsided in other parts of the world. It is hardly possible to acquit the emperor of permitting, or even encouraging it in the latter part of his reign; but the edict which he sent to Lyons must have been nearly the last which he published on the subject. In the year 178, he set out with his son Commodus for a second war with the Marcomanni, and in 180, he died in Pannonia. It is probable that the religion of the

Christians had attracted the attention of this emperor more than of his predecessors. This may have been partly owing to the rapid increase of it during his long reign of nineteen years; but there were also reasons of a peculiar and personal nature, which were likely to prejudice M. Aurelius against the Christians. His mother, who was a religious woman according to the notions of the day, had given early impressions to her son in favour of heathenism. He was brought up in the principles of the Stoic philosophy, and professed himself attached to that school, of which he has given a proof in his own writings. The celebrated orator, Fronto, from whom he took lessons in eloquence, published a work against the Christians; which shows that their opinions had already attracted the notice of the learned. The emperor mentions another person, named Diognetus, who had taught him to have no faith in incantations, the exorcising of evil spirits, or any pretended wonders of that kind: and we can hardly doubt that this caution was directed against the miracles which were appealed to by the Christians.

But the person who had the principal charge of instructing the young emperor, was Apollonius, who has been already mentioned as trying to turn Bardesanes from his belief in Christianity. Bardesanes is stated to have written a work on the subject of *fate*, which was dedicated to Antoninus; but it has been doubted whether this meant the emperor, or a private friend of that name.

The arguments of Apollonius were likely to have much more weight with the emperor than with Bardesanes; and we have seen that the longer he continued to reign, the more he showed his hostility to the Christians. He could not help observing the patient fortitude with which they endured tortures and death, and he mentions it in one of his own writings; but he attributed it to nothing but obstinacy, which was also the opinion of other heathen writers, who pretended to despise the Christians for the very quality which proved the sincerity of their professions. So little did the heathen understand the principles of that religion which they endeavoured to destroy.

THE EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS.

The Epistles of Ignatius.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

THE first letter which we gave in our previous volume of the Works of the Apostolic Fathers, was written from Rome. We pass over now to the far East,—to Antioch, the city in which the disciples were first called Christians, and which became after Jerusalem the centre for a while of Christian activity (see Acts xiii.; xiv. 26; xv. 22). We know how St Paul started from there on his great missionary journeys, and planted the Cross in several cities in Asia Minor and in Greece, then made his sojourn at Corinth and at Ephesus successively; and thus Greece and Western Asia became rich in churches. From this time we lose sight of Antioch for a good while; it appears scarcely at all in the Acts of the Apostles afterwards. In the second century, however, it again comes before us as the see of St Ignatius, the holy martyr, whose writings are now before the reader.

Two interesting subjects have to be discussed. The one is that of the facts of the martyr's life, the other that of the genuineness of the Epistles bearing his name. These we shall take separately. An ancient tradition makes Ignatius to have been the little child whom our blessed Lord took up in His arms, when He told His disciples that they must become as little children if they would enter into the kingdom of heaven, and it is said that this is the reason why at the head of each of his Epistles the Saint calls himself *Theophorus*. But this tradition rests on no sufficient evidence, and must probably be relegated to the region of fable. As the probable significance of the name Theophorus, see note at the beginning of the Epistle to the Magnesians.

But though we cannot adopt the story of our Saviour's taking Ignatius into His arms, St Chrysostom tells us that he was intimately connected with the apostles, and by them instructed in the faith. What was the country in which he was born, or who were his parents, we know not. It seems probable, from some expressions in his writings, that he was brought up as a heathen and converted in mature life. Upon the death of Euodias he was chosen Bishop of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria. "How he behaved himself in this great station," writes Archbishop Wake, "though we have no particular account left to us, yet we may easily conclude from that short hint that is given us of it, in the relation of his martyrdom, where we are told that he was 'a man in all things like unto the apostles, that as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labour, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary; that he was like a divine lamp illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures; and lastly, that to preserve his church, he doubted not freely, and of his own accord, to expose himself to the most bitter death.' This is in general the character of his behaviour in his church of Antioch; a greater than which can hardly be given to any man. Nor indeed can we doubt but that he, who, as Eusebius tells us, and as his epistles still remaining abundantly testify, was so careful of all the other churches to confirm them in a sound faith, and in a constant adherence to their holy religion, was certainly much more vigilant to promote the interests of piety within his own diocese, which was blessed with his government above forty years.

"Hence we may observe what a tender concern he expresses in all his epistles for his church at Antioch; with what affection he recommends it to the prayers of those to whom he wrote; and especially to the care of his dear friend and fellow-disciple, St Polycarp. And when he heard at Troas of the ceasing of the persecution there, how did he rejoice at it, and require all the neighbouring churches to rejoice with him, and to send their messengers and letters thither to congratulate with them upon that account.

"Such was his affection towards his own church, and his care of all the others round about him; by both of which he became in such an extraordinary favour with them, that they

thought nothing could be sufficient to express their respect towards him. And therefore we are told, that when he was carried from Antioch to Rome, in order to his suffering, all the churches everywhere sent messengers on the way to attend him, and to communicate to his wants. And what is yet more, they were generally their bishops themselves that came to meet him, and thought it a singular happiness to receive some spiritual exhortations from him. And when he was dead, they paid such an honour to his memory, as to account the few bones that were left of him by the wild beasts, more precious than the richest jewels: insomuch that we are told they were several ages after taken up from the place where they were first deposited, as not honourable enough for them to lie in, and that being brought within the city where he once was bishop, there was instituted a yearly festival in memory of him."

We pass on to the second point, the genuineness of the epistles attributed to St Ignatius. It will be convenient if we say a word on the latter point first. That he wrote some of the epistles bearing his name, is a matter which there is no reason to question. In the same century in which he lived, one of his epistles was ridiculed and parodied by Lucian; and there are many quotations from them in the early Fathers. But there were other epistles bearing his name, besides those whose genuineness was admitted, which will not stand the test of minute examination, including a pretended correspondence with St John and with the Blessed Virgin, &c. The whole controversy has been dealt with most fully and exhaustively by the Bishop of Durham, Dr Lightfoot, who has examined every detail, and given to the world a work which will probably hold its ground as long as English theology lasts, as setting this question at rest. To that work we must refer the reader who wishes to become fully acquainted with the Ignatius controversy (*Apostolic Fathers, Part II., Ignatius and Polycarp.* 2 vols., Macmillan, 1887). And now we cannot do better than quote Archbishop's Wake's "Discourse" on the Ignatian Epistles, confirmed as it is by later research; after which we will state shortly some important additions which subsequent researches have been able to make to his account.

"1. Before I enter," says Archbishop Wake, "upon that account which I am to give of the epistles of St Ignatius, it

will be necessary for me to observe that there have been considerable differences in the editions of the epistles of this holy man, no less than in the judgment of our later critics concerning them. To pass by the first and most imperfect of them, the best that for a long time was extant contained not only a great number of epistles falsely ascribed to this author, but even those that were genuine so altered and corrupted that it was hard to find out the true Ignatius in them.

"2. The first that began to remedy this confusion, and to restore this great writer to his primitive simplicity, was our most reverend and learned Archbishop Usher, in his edition of them at Oxford, anno 1644. But still he wanted a correct copy of the original Greek; the epistles set out by him, though exceedingly more sincere than any we had seen before, yet consisting only of the old Latin translations of them. Now this was in great measure performed by the learned Isaac Vossius in the edition printed by him at Amsterdam, anno 1646: in which, from the Florentine manuscript, he published six of the epistles of this holy martyr mentioned by Eusebius in their ancient and pure Greek, and the seventh so happily amended from the ancient Latin version that there was but little doubt to be made of the integrity of that too. But to remove all scruple concerning this one epistle, Mr Ruinart has also published that from a Greek uninterpolated copy in the Acts of the Martyrdom of this holy man set forth by him at Paris, anno 1689. And concerning these epistles of St Ignatius enumerated by Eusebius, and set out according to their primitive purity by those learned men whom I have before mentioned and from them translated into the following collection, there are two things to be considered and proved by me in this place: first, that St Ignatius did write such epistles as those I have here translated; and, secondly, that those epistles we here have are the very epistles which he wrote.

"3. That Ignatius did in general write such epistles to the churches about him, however it has been denied by some, is yet I think now universally allowed, even by those who are the greatest opposers of these epistles which we affirm to be his. That he wrote to those particular churches to which the epistles here subjoined are addressed, we have both St Polycarp and Eusebius to assure us. For, first, St Polycarp in the close of his epistle (which I am now to look upon as suffi-

ciently proved to be his), speaking to the Philippians of this holy man, tells them that he had sent them all such epistles of his as Ignatius had either written to himself or to his church at Smyrna, or as had hitherto come to his hands. So that here then we have a plain account of two of those epistles which we affirm Ignatius to have written: one to St Polycarp himself, another to the church of Smyrna, of which he was bishop.

"4. But Eusebius will enable us to carry this testimony yet farther. Whilst assuring us that he wrote four epistles from Smyrna, namely, to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome, he gives us just grounds to conclude that these also must have been part of St Polycarp's collection; and have been some of those others, besides the two before-mentioned, which he tells us he sent to the Philippians, unless we should suppose that either he knew not of Ignatius's writing (though every day, almost every hour, with him at the time he wrote them), or else that, knowing of it, he took no care to preserve the copies of his epistles, which yet we see he put the highest value upon that can well be imagined. Seeing, therefore, we cannot with any reason suppose either that St Polycarp did not know of Ignatius's writing to these churches, nor is it probable that, being present with him at the writing of them, and acquainted with it, he should not have kept any copies of his letters to them,—seeing, lastly, he himself tells us that he had copies of more of the epistles of this great saint, besides those that were sent to Smyrna, and that what he had he sent to the Philippians,—neither can we reasonably doubt but that these also were in his hands, and sent by him to the church at Philippi.

"5. And thus have we, I think, upon very good grounds, concluded that six of the seven epistles which we affirm to have been written by St Ignatius were collected by St Polycarp, and sent together with his own epistle to the Philippians. Let me add yet farther, that neither can we reasonably question but that the seventh too was at that time in the hands of St Polycarp; and by consequence that what we now have is no other collection than what he made, and by that means helped to preserve to after ages, of the epistles of this holy martyr. Now this I conclude not only from the nearness of the church of Philadelphia, to which it was written, to that of

Smyrna, in which St Polycarp presided, and from the great respect which all the neighbouring churches paid to him, as a kind of universal bishop of the whole lesser Asia, but from the conclusion of the epistle itself, which tells us that it was sent by Ignatius to the Philadelphians, not only from the same place and at the same time that he wrote to St Polycarp himself and to his church of Smyrna, but also by the same person that carried the other two, and that person St Polycarp's own deacon, whom he had sent with Ignatius to Troas, and by whom Ignatius wrote back that epistle.

"6. St Polycarp therefore certainly knew of Ignatius's writing to the Philadelphians, and very probably sent on Burrhus, his deacon, from Smyrna to Philadelphia with his letter. And then, I think, we may very reasonably conclude that he brought back with him the copy of it, and that St Polycarp had that epistle too in his hands when he wrote to the Philippians.

"7. Such good grounds are there to believe that the collection we now have of St Ignatius's epistles was no other than what St Polycarp himself made, and referred to in that passage of his own epistle to the Philippians which I have before shown to be truly his, and not the addition of any later hand. And the same is the account which Eusebius himself has given us of this matter. He tells us that, as Ignatius was on his way to Rome, where he was to be cast to the wild beasts, he not only confirmed the churches that were in the places through which he passed, by his exhortations, but wrote to the chiefest of those others that were near, such epistles as these of which we are now speaking; and that, as he goes on, in this following order:—First, from Smyrna, where he tarried some time with his old acquaintance and fellow-disciple, St Polycarp, he wrote to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, and Romans; and, being gone farther on his way to Troas, he from thence wrote to the Philadelphians and Smyrnæans; ἰδίως τε τῷ ταύτης προηγουμένῳ Πολυκάρπῳ, and a particular letter to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.

"8. I say nothing to the testimony of St Hierome as to this matter, who, as he exactly agrees with Eusebius in all this, so I make no question but that he transcribed this account out of him. It is sufficiently evident, from what has

been already observed, not only that St Ignatius did in general write some epistles, but that he wrote to those particular churches to which the epistles we now have are directed, and of which I am persuaded there ought to be as little doubt.

"9. As for the other point proposed, and by which the foregoing also will be yet more fully confirmed, namely, that those epistles we now have are the same that Ignatius wrote, two things there are that seem to determine our belief of it: first, that there is nothing in these epistles, as we now have them, either unworthy of the spirit of Ignatius or the character that antiquity has given us of them—nothing disagreeing to the time in which he wrote, or that should seem to speak them to have been the work of any later author. Now this, as it hardly ever fails to discover such pieces as are falsely imposed upon ancient authors, so there not appearing any thing of this kind in these epistles inclines us the more readily to conclude that they were undoubtedly written by him whose they are said to be.

"10. But this is only a presumptive argument in favour of these epistles, which, though it may serve to dispose us the more readily to receive them as true and genuine, yet is it not alone sufficient to prove them so to be. The other argument I have to offer is positive and convincing; namely, that we find these epistles, as they now are, exactly agreeing both with the descriptions which St Polycarp and Eusebius have left us of those which they took to be the authentic epistles of this holy man, and with the numerous quotations which the ancient fathers have made out of them, and which all occur in the same words, in our present copies of them, that they are cited in their writings.

"11. This has been so fully shown by our most learned bishop Pearson, and indeed was so manifest of itself to any one that had ever made any comparisons of this kind, that Monsieur Daillé[1] himself could not deny but that we have the same

[1] This writer published a work in 1666, which in its day made a great stir, attacking the genuineness of the Ignatian Epistles. His work is pronounced by the Bishop of Durham uncritical and confused. He has shown without much difficulty that certain writings ascribed to Ignatius are spurious, and on that basis has endeavoured to cast a slur upon the whole. But Archbishop Usher had already slain the spurious letters, and had discriminated between those and the genuine. However, as

epistles now that Eusebius, Athanasius, St Jerome, Theodoret, and Gelasius, had heretofore; so that the only question then to be considered by us is whether those epistles which Eusebius, &c., had, were not counterfeit, but the true epistles of this great martyr.

"12. And here, first, it is evident that if those epistles which Eusebius first, and then the rest of those ancient writers whom I before mentioned, took for the genuine epistles of St Ignatius, were none of his, the true epistles, which I have just now shown, and which it is confessed were written by him, must before that time have been utterly lost, or otherwise destroyed, out of the world: it being very improbable, that had the true epistles been still remaining, neither so inquisitive a searcher into antiquity as Eusebius should have heard of them, nor such great and learned men as those that followed after have had any suspicion of any such deceit. But now, whether this be probable—whether it can be supposed that such epistles as these, directed to so many great and eminent churches, collected by so venerable a man as St Polycarp, and written by so glorious a martyr as St Ignatius, should within so little time have been utterly lost out of the church, I shall leave it to any one, who considers how great a reverence the primitive Christians had for everything that came from the hands of such holy and excellent men and such glorious martyrs of Christ, to determine.

"13. We read in the Acts of the Martyrdom of this blessed saint with what a mighty care those who went with him to Rome, and were the eye-witnesses of his sufferings, gathered up the few hard bones of his body which the lions had left, and how they brought them back in a kind of triumph to his church at Antioch.[1] And we are told with what pomp they were many ages after taken up from the place where they were first buried, and carried by the command of the younger Theodosius within the city, insomuch that, as our historians observe, there was a festival solemnity established upon that

Bishop Lightfoot observes, Daillé's treatise has a claim upon our gratitude, for it led the great Bishop Pearson to write his *Vindiciæ Epistolarum S. Ignatii* (1672), a splendid piece of criticism, learned, acute, moderate. "Compared with Daillé's attack," says the Bishop of Durham, "Pearson's reply was as light to darkness. In England at all events his work seemed to be accepted as closing the controversy."]

[1] See his Martyrdom, num. xii.

occasion, and annually observed to the very time in which they wrote in remembrance of it. But was the church then so careful of a few dead bones of such a saint as this? and did they esteem them as so great a treasure, and yet had they so little regard to his writings, the last testimonies of his affection to the churches to which he wrote, as to suffer them, within two hundred years, to be so utterly lost as not to be once known or heard of by the greatest and most curious searchers into antiquity? This is, I confess, to me so very improbable that I could almost as easily believe the Holy Scriptures themselves to have been upon a sudden changed into some other epistles than what St Peter or St Paul wrote, as that such epistles as these could be so totally defaced as some pretend, and new ones set out in the room of them, and yet nobody know anything of the doing of it. But such impossibilities as these must learned men be content to please themselves and impose upon others withal, who resolve to be wiser than any that went before them, and to be able to know better at fifteen hundred years' distance what Ignatius wrote, than those did who lived within two centuries of him.

"14. For, to press our argument yet more closely, since it is allowed that Ignatius did write some epistles and I think sufficiently evidently evident that St Polycarp did make a collection of them and send them together with his own to the Philippians, I presume it will not be questioned but that he most certainly had the genuine writings of that holy martyr, his dear friend and fellow-disciple. Now St Polycarp suffered not, according to the earliest computation of our accurate bishop Pearson, till the year of our Saviour 147, and others suppose it to have been yet later.[1] Hitherto therefore it is certain that the true epistles of Ignatius continued in the church, it being by no means probable that they should have been changed whilst the men lived to whom Ignatius wrote, while Polycarp was living who collected them together, and whilst those of the church of Philippi remained to whom he sent them.

"15. To St Polycarp let us add his scholar and admirer Irenæus, and, as himself professes, a most diligent collector of whatever fell from that holy man. That he had the epistles of St Ignatius, Eusebius assures us, who particularly takes

[1] See *post*, p. 152.

notice of his quoting several passages out of them, and mentions one of his quotations out of the epistle to the Romans which is still extant in the works of Irenæus, and agrees with the copy published by Monsieur Ruinart; only that this hath ἄρτος Χριστοῦ, whereas it ought to be read ἄρτος Θεοῦ, as appears from the old interpretation both of Irenæus and of Ignatius's epistles; which, however, is no greater a difference than that of Acts xx. 28, where some copies have Ἐκκλησίαν Θεοῦ, others Κυρίου, others Χριστοῦ; not to mention any other places of the New Testament. And it must be allowed that the other passages of which Eusebius speaks were also to have been found in the epistles as he had them; because, otherwise, the difference between what the one quoted and the other read in his copy of those epistles would presently have discovered the fraud, and shown that his epistles were not the same with those which Irenæus mentioned.

"16. And this puts the matter yet more out of doubt; for, if Eusebius had the same epistles that Irenæus had, we must allow one of these two things: either that he had a genuine copy of them, as we affirm, or that Irenæus, the disciple and contemporary of St Polycarp, had not, which would be very unreasonable to suppose.

"17. For (not to say any thing as to this matter, that Irenæus lived too near the time both in which Ignatius wrote and St Polycarp collected his epistles, to have been imposed upon in this particular), seeing he himself tells us how careful he was to gather up whatever came from the hand of that holy man, and that he not only had the epistles of Ignatius, as appears by his citing of them, but as himself declares had also the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, at the end of which the epistles of Ignatius were subjoined, what can we conclude but that the copy he had of both was taken from that of his master Polycarp, which being to be sure authentic, it must remain that Irenæus's was so too?

"18. Were it needful to add any thing yet farther, to show that Eusebius, who is confessed to have had the same copy of St Ignatius that we have now, had no other than that of St Polycarp so often mentioned, I might to the testimony of Irenæus, before alleged, add that of Origen, who began to live some time before the other died; for this father has not

only spoken of these epistles, but has left us two quotations out of them; and both to be found in our copies, which we affirm to be true and authentic. Now from him to Eusebius was not above half a century,—too little a while for so great an alteration to have been made in writings spread up and down into so many hands, read by all the learned and pious men of those days, and upon all those accounts utterly incapable of such a change as is, without the authority of one single writer, only upon I know not what conjectures, supposed to have been made in them.

"19. But I enlarge myself too much in so plain a manner, and which I should hardly have thought worth the examining thus distinctly, had it not engaged the pens of so many learned men of the reformed religion that it might have seemed too great an omission in such a discourse as this not to have given some account of it. As for what we find a late learned writer advancing in opposition to the authority of these epistles, that our copies, though exceedingly more perfect than any that were ever extant before those great men Bishop Usher and Isaac Vossius set out,—the one the old Latin versions, the other the original Greek, from the manuscript which he found of it in the Florentine library,—yet there may be reason still to suspect that they are not so free from all corruptions as were to be wished: I reply that, if he means that the same has happened to these epistles as has done to all other ancient writings, that letters or words have been mistaken, and perhaps even the pieces of some sentences corrupted, either by the carelessness or ignorance of the transcribers,—I see no reason why we should deny that to have befallen these epistles which has been the misfortune of all other pieces of the like antiquity. It has been often declared, therefore, that neither do we contend about this, nor can any one who reads the best copies we have of them, with any care or judgment, make any doubt of it. But as for any larger interpolations, such as were those of the copies before extant, for any changes or mistakes that may call in question either the credit or authority of these epistles as we now have them, we utterly deny that there are any such in these last editions of them; nor has that learned man offered any thing to induce us to believe that there are.

"20. And here I should have concluded these reflections,

but that there is yet one thing more to be taken notice of which must by no means be passed by; namely, that our most learned archbishop Usher himself, though he agrees with us as to the authority of the other six epistles here translated, yet doubts whether the seventh, written to St Polycarp, be genuine or no. Nor does Isaac Vossius himself deny but that there are some things in it that may seem to render it suspicious; though more to prove it to be authentic. For, first, St Polycarp expressly assures us that Ignatius had written to him; so both Eusebius and St Hierome teach us to understand his expression; they mention the epistle of St Polycarp, as distinct from that to the church of Smyrna. And, secondly, the ancient fathers quote it as Ignatius's, no less than the rest. From both which it seems to be very plain that this also has the same evidence of being written by Ignatius that any of the rest have; and, therefore, that he who allows it as sufficient for the one ought not to refuse it for the other.

"21. As for that which seems to be the most difficult to account for in it, namely, his writing in the plural number, and giving several instructions about the behaviour of the common people, particularly that, 'to adhere to the bishop' (chap. v. and vi.), it is rightly observed by Vossius, in his annotations on those chapters, that Ignatius in that place speaks not to St Polycarp, but, by a usual change of person, intimates what he would have Polycarp say to his church; and whosoever shall consider in what manner he brings in what he there delivers, 'Say to my sisters,' &c.—and again, 'Exhort my brethren,' &c.—will presently see how those instructions are to be understood.

"22. And now it remains only that I give some short account of the following translation of these epistles. The copies from which I did it were those of Isaac Vossius and Bishop Usher, comparing both, as I had occasion, with the late edition of Cotelerius. In the salutation of the epistle to the Romans, I have departed from all of them, and followed the correction of that judicious man whose name I mention in the margin of it. I thought myself the more at liberty to do this, because that this epistle was not found in the Florentine manuscript, but made up, in some measure, from the Latin versions, by the conjectures of learned men; and however it has since

been published, together with the Acts of the Martyrdom of St Ignatius, in its orginal Greek, yet I have rather chosen to note the differences between that and the copy I before followed than to give a preference to either. And the reader will have this advantage by it, that he will here see both ; and may make use of his own judgment, if at any time the copies disagree, to inform him which he thinks to be the most correct. For the rest, I have kept as strictly to the text of Vossius as the sense would permit me to do ; only, where a place was manifestly imperfect, I have sometimes taken the liberty to express my own conjectures, though differing from those of others, with whom, nevertheless, I pretend not to compare myself. But then I seldom do this, without taking notice of it, and telling my reader to whom he may recur for somewhat a different opinion. If, after all, there appear some faults in my translation (though I may modestly say, I have taken what care my little acquaintance with these matters would enable me to do, to avoid them), I desire it may be considered that I had a difficult author to deal with ; and I shall be very ready thankfully to amend any error that any more discerning person shall think fit to advertise me of, if ever this collection should be thought worthy to come to another edition."

A very important addition to this controversy has been made since Archbishop Wake penned the above discourse. Up to this date, it will be seen there were two theories concerning the Ignatian Epistles: that which accepted the larger number, twelve in all; and that which only reckoned those to be genuine which we have given here. To this latter theory Archbishop Wake and Bishop Pearson held. In 1847 a very learned Syrian scholar, Dr Cureton, Rector of St Margaret's, Westminster, found among some Syriac MSS. recently acquired by the British Museum, three Epistles of Ignatius, in that language. These three were, to Polycarp, to the Ephesians, and to the Romans. Even these were in a much shorter form than the Greek. Cureton rushed to the conclusion that these were the only genuine Epistles of St Ignatius, and for a while had many followers. But this view is no longer held; and as we have already observed, Bishop Lightfoot, setting aside for the time being his studies of St Paul's

Epistles, gave himself to that of the Apostolic Fathers, feeling that any discoveries from that study would be of priceless value towards determining the character of the Church and the Canon of Holy Scripture at the end of the apostolic period. He has placed the genuineness of the Ignatian Epistles, as Wake accepted them, on a basis which hardly admits of further dispute.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE EPHESIANS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[When the holy bishop was condemned at Antioch to be taken to Rome, there to be thrown to wild beasts, he was sent through Asia Minor, either altogether by land, or more probably from Seleucia to some part of the southern coast, and thence successively to Philadelphia, to Sardis, to Smyrna. At Smyrna he was received by the aged Bishop Polycarp and the Church, and here he was visited by brethren from Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus. From the latter Church came the Bishop Onesimus and a Deacon Burrhus. And here he wrote four letters—three to Churches which had shown their love to him by sending these embassies, and one to the Romans whom the saint looks to meet when he comes for his martyrdom. After a halt at Smyrna, during which no doubt his guards, who were very rough and hard with him, were discharging other commissions entrusted to them, he was taken to Troas, and here he wrote his three other letters, not, as were the rest, to churches which he had never seen, but to those which he had visited—to Smyrna, to Philadelphia, and to Polycarp. Thence he was taken on to Philippi, thence to Rome, and the martyr's crown was won.

We give, first, Archbishop Wake's analysis of the Epistle.

I. Salutation. He thanks them for sending Onesimus, their bishop, to him, whom he greatly commends, and expresses his joy to receive from him so good a character of them.

II. He mentions the rest of their members who were sent with Onesimus to him, and exhorts them to unity, by a due subjection to their bishop and presbyters.

III. He excuses the liberty he takes of admonishing them, and so returns to his advice to them;

IV. Which is still the same; namely, by a due subjection to their bishop, to preserve unity among themselves:

V. The benefit of which he particularly sets out to them.

VI. That they ought not to respect their bishop the less, because he is not forward in exacting it from them; but should rather honour him the more; which he also commends them for doing.

VII. He warns them against heretics; bidding them stick to their Master, Jesus Christ, whose divine and human nature he declares to them.

VIII. IX. He commends them for their care to keep themselves from false teachers, and shows them the way to God.

X. He exhorts them to prayer, and to behave themselves unblamably towards those that are without:

XI. XII. To be careful of their salvation; to pray for himself, whose own worth he much lessens in comparison of theirs; especially,

XIII. XIV. To be frequent in public devotion: to live in unity, in faith and in charity: and

XV. To show forth the truth of their profession by their works:

XVI. XVII. To have a care that the gospel of Christ be not corrupted:

XVIII. Upon which occasion he treats particularly of the three great mysteries of Christianity, viz. the virginity of Mary, and the incarnation and death of Christ, which he says were hid from the Devil.

XIX. How the birth of Christ was, in a most extraordinary manner, revealed to the world.

XX. XXI. Of all which he promises to write more largely in a second epistle, and then finally undertakes for their salvation, if they continued, as he had exhorted them, to pursue it, by unity among themselves and piety towards God.]

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE EPHESIANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the church which is at Ephesus in Asia, most deservedly happy, being blessed through the greatness and fulness of God[1] the Father, and predestinated before the world began, that it should be always unto an enduring and unchangeable glory, being united and chosen through His true passion, according to the will of the Father and Jesus Christ our God; all happiness, by Jesus Christ, and His undefiled grace.

I have heard of your name, much-beloved in God, which ye have very[2] justly attained by a habit of righteousness, according to the faith and love which is in Jesus Christ our Saviour, how that, being followers of God, and stirring up yourselves by the blood of Christ, ye have perfectly accomplished the work that was connatural unto you. For, hearing that I came bound from Syria, for the common name and hope, trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome, that so, by suffering, I may become indeed the disciple of him "who gave himself to God an offering and sacrifice for us"[3] [ye hastened to see me]; I received, therefore, in the name of God your whole multitude in Onesimus, who by inexpressible love is ours, but according to the flesh is your bishop; whom I beseech you, by Jesus Christ, to love, and that you would all strive to be like unto him. And blessed be God who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such an excellent bishop.

II. For what concerns my fellow-servant Burrhus, and your

[1] See Eph. iii. 19. [2] Comp. Gal. iv. 8. [3] Eph. v. 2.

most blessed deacon in things pertaining to God, I entreat you that he may tarry longer both for yours and your bishop's honour. And Crocus also, worthy both our God and you, whom I have received as the pattern of your love, has in all things refreshed me, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall also refresh him; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euplus, and Fronto, in whom I have, as to your charity, seen all of you. And may I always have joy[1] of you, if I shall be worthy of it. It is, therefore, fitting that you should by all means glorify Jesus Christ, who hath glorified you—that by a uniform obedience "ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, and may all speak the same things concerning every thing;"[2] and that, being subject to your bishop and the presbytery, ye may be wholly and thoroughly sanctified.

III. These things I prescribe to you, not as if I were somebody extraordinary (for though I am bound for His name, I am not yet perfect in Christ Jesus), but now I begin to learn, and I speak to you as fellow-disciples together with me. For I ought to have been stirred up by you, in faith, in admonition, in patience, in long-suffering. But, forasmuch as charity suffers me not to be silent towards you, I have first taken upon me to exhort you that ye would all run together, according to the will of God. For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is sent by the will of the Father; as the bishops, appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are by the will of Jesus Christ.

IV. Wherefore it will become you to run together according to the will of your bishop, as also ye do. For your famous presbytery (worthy of God) is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore, in your concord and agreeing charity, Jesus Christ is sung, and every single person among you makes up the chorus; that so, being all consonant in love, and taking up the song of God, ye may in a perfect unity, with one voice, sing to the Father by Jesus Christ, to the end that He may both hear you, and perceive by your works that ye are indeed the members of His Son: wherefore it is profitable for you to live in an unblamable unity, that so ye may always have a fellowship with God.

V. For if I in this little time have had such a familiarity

[1] See Philemon 20. [2] Cor. i. 10.

with your bishop (I mean not a carnal, but spiritual acquaintance with him), how much more must I think you happy, who are so joined to him as the church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, that so all things may agree in the same unity! Let no man deceive himself; if a man be not within the *altar*, he is deprived of the *bread* of God. For, if the prayer of one or two[1] be of such force as we are told, how much more powerful shall that of the bishop and the whole church be! He therefore that does not come together into the same place with it is proud, and has already condemned himself. For it is written, "God resisteth the proud."[2] Let us take heed, therefore, that we do not set ourselves against the bishop, that we may be subject to God.

VI. The more any one sees his bishop silent the more let him revere him. For whomsoever the master of the house sends to be over his own household, we ought in like manner to receive him as we would do him that sent him. It is, therefore, evident that we ought to look upon the bishop even as we would do upon the Lord Himself. And indeed Onesimus himself does greatly commend your good order in God —that you all live according to the truth, and that no heresy dwells among you. For neither do ye hearken to any one more than to Jesus Christ, speaking to you in truth.

VII. For some there are who carry about the name of Christ in deceitfulness, but do things unworthy of God; whom ye must flee, as ye would do so many wild beasts; for they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly—against whom ye must guard yourselves, as men hardly to be cured. There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, made and not made; God incarnate; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible, then impassible; even Jesus Christ our Lord.

VIII. Wherefore let no man deceive you; as indeed neither are ye deceived, being wholly the servants of God. For inasmuch as there is no contention or strife among you, to trouble you, ye must needs live according to God's will. My soul be for yours; and I myself the expiatory offering for your church of Ephesus, so famous throughout the world. They that are of the flesh cannot do the works of the Spirit; neither they that are of the Spirit, the works of the flesh. As he that has faith cannot be an infidel; nor he that is an

[1] Matt. xviii. 19. [2] James iv. 6.

infidel, have faith. But even those things which ye do according to the flesh are spiritual; forasmuch as ye do all things in Jesus Christ.

IX. Nevertheless I have heard of some who have passed by you having perverse doctrine; whom ye did not suffer to sow among you, but stopped your ears, that ye might not receive those things that were sown by them; as being the stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for His[1] building, and drawn up on high by the cross of Christ as by an engine, using the Holy Ghost as the rope: your faith being your support, and your charity the way that leads unto God. Ye are, therefore, with all your companions in the same journey, full of God: His spiritual temples, full of Christ, full of holiness; adorned in all things with the commands of Christ, in whom also I rejoice that I have been thought worthy by this present epistle to converse, and joy together with you, that with respect to the other life, ye love nothing but God only.

X. Pray also without ceasing for other men; for there is hope of repentance in them, that they may attain unto God. Let them, therefore, at least be instructed by your works, if they will be no other way. Be ye mild at their anger, humble at their boasting; to their blasphemies, return your prayers; to their error, your firmness in the faith: when they are cruel, be ye gentle; not endeavouring to imitate their ways: (let us be their brethren in all kindness and moderation, but let us be followers of the Lord: for who was ever more unjustly used? more destitute? more despised?) that so no herb of the devil may be found in you: but ye may remain in all holiness and sobriety both of body and spirit, in Christ Jesus.[2]

XI. The last times are come upon us; let us, therefore, be very reverent, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it be not to us unto condemnation. For let us either fear the wrath that is to come, or let us love the grace that we at present enjoy; that by the one or other of these we may be found in Christ Jesus, unto true life. Besides Him, let nothing be worthy of you; for whom also I bear about these bonds, those spiritual jewels, in which I would to God that I might arise through your prayers: of which I entreat you to make me always partaker, that I may be found in the lot of

[1] Comp. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22. 1 Pet. ii. 5. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 34.

the Christians of Ephesus, who have always agreed with the apostles, through the power of Jesus Christ.

XII. I know both who I am, and to whom I write: I, a person condemned; ye, such as have obtained mercy: I, exposed to danger; ye, confirmed against danger. Ye are the passage of those that are killed for God: the companions of Paul in the mysteries of the gospel—the holy, the martyr, the deservedly most happy Paul; at whose feet may I be found, when I shall have attained unto God; who throughout all his epistle makes mention of you in Christ Jesus.

XIII. Let it be your care, therefore, to come more fully together, to the praise and glory of God. For when ye meet fully together in the same place, the powers of the devil are destroyed, and his mischief is dissolved by the unity of your faith. And indeed nothing is better than peace; by which all war, both spiritual and earthly, is abolished.

XIV. Of all which nothing is hid from you, if ye have perfect faith and charity in Christ Jesus, which are the beginning and end of life; for the beginning is faith, the end charity. And these two, joined together, are of God; but all other things which concern a holy life are the consequences of these. No man professing a true faith sinneth; neither does he who has charity hate any. The tree is made manifest by its fruit;[1] so they who profess themselves to be Christians are known by what they do; for Christianity is not the work of an outward profession; but shows itself in the power of faith if a man be found faithful unto the end.

XV. It is better for a man to hold his peace, and be— than to say he is a Christian, and not to be. It is good to teach, if what he says he does likewise. There is, therefore, one Master, who spake, and it was done; and even those things which He did without speaking are worthy of the Father. He that possesses the word of Jesus is truly able to hear His very silence, that he may be perfect; and both do according to what he speaks, and be known by those things of which he is silent. There is nothing hid from God, but even our secrets are nigh unto Him. Let us, therefore, do all things as becomes those who have God dwelling in them, that we may be His temples, and He may be our God: as also He is; and will manifest Himself before our faces, by those things for which we justly love Him.

[1] Matt. xii. 33.

XVI. Be not deceived, my brethren; those that corrupt families[1] by adultery shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If therefore they who do this according to the flesh have suffered death,[2] how much more shall he die, who by his wicked doctrine corrupts the faith of God, for which Christ was crucified? He that is thus defiled shall depart into unquenchable fire, and so shall he that hearkens to him.

XVII. For this cause did the Lord suffer the ointment to be poured on His head,[3] that He might breathe the breath of immortality into His Church. Be not ye, therefore, anointed with the evil savour of the doctrine of the prince of this world; let him not take you captive from the life that is set before you. And why are not we all wise; seeing we have received the knowledge of God, which is Jesus Christ? Why do we suffer ourselves foolishly to perish, not considering the gift which the Lord has truly sent to us?

XVIII. Let my life be sacrificed[4] for the doctrine of the Cross, which is indeed a scandal to the unbelievers, but to us is salvation and life eternal. "Where is the wise man? Where is the disputer?"[5] Where is the boasting of them that are called wise? For our God Jesus Christ was, according to the dispensation of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the Holy Ghost; He was born and baptised, that through His passion, He might purify water "to the washing away of sin."

XIX. Now the virginity of Mary, and He who was born of her, were kept in secret from the prince of this world; as was also the death of our Lord: three of the mysteries the most spoken of throughout the world, yet done in secret by God. How then was our Saviour manifested to the world? A star shone in heaven beyond all the other stars, and its light was inexpressible, and its novelty struck terror into men's minds. All the rest of the stars, together with the sun and moon, were the chorus to this star; but that sent out its light exceedingly above them all. And men began to be troubled to think whence this new star came, so unlike to all the others. Hence all the power of magic became dissolved, and every bond of wickedness was destroyed; men's ignorance was taken away, and the old kingdom abolished; God

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [2] 1 Cor. x. 8. [3] Ps. xliv. 8; cxxxii. 2.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 18, 23, 24. [5] 1 Cor. i. 20.

Himself appearing in the form of a man, for the renewal of eternal life. From thence began what God had prepared; from thenceforth things were disturbed; forasmuch as He designed to abolish death.

XX. But if Jesus Christ shall give me grace through your prayers, and it be His will, I purpose, in a second epistle, which I will suddenly write unto you, to manifest to you more fully the dispensation, of which I have now begun to speak, unto the new man, which is Jesus Christ; both in His faith and charity, in His suffering and in His resurrection; especially if the Lord shall make known unto me, that ye all by name come together in common in one faith, and in one Jesus Christ (who was of the race of David according to the flesh) the Son of man, and Son of God; obeying your bishop and the presbytery with an entire affection; breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, our antidote that we should not die, but live for ever in Christ Jesus.

XXI. My soul be for yours, and theirs whom ye have sent, to the glory of God, even unto Smyrna, from whence also I write to you; giving thanks unto the Lord, and loving Polycarp even as I do you. Remember me, as Jesus Christ does remember you. Pray for the church which is in Syria, from whence I am carried bound to Rome; being the least of all the faithful which are there, as I have been thought worthy to be found to the glory of God. Fare ye well in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ our common hope. Amen.

To the Ephesians.

EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE MAGNESIANS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[MAGNESIA was an important city, situated on the river Mæander, about fifteen miles from Ephesus. It was this city in which Themistocles resided, on his exile from Athens. Dr Lightfoot supposes that it was Christianised by Tychicus, and gives reasons for believing that it was his birthplace. Archbishop Wake gives the following analysis of its contents:—

I. Salutation. The occasion of his writing to them, and to the other churches that were about them; and then mentions,

II. The arrival of Damas, their bishop, and of the rest whom they had sent unto him.

III. He exhorts them to all due reverence and subjection to their bishop; notwithstanding he was but a young man, and had not long been in that great office among them.

IV. Which also they must show if they will be Christians indeed.

V. That we must all die in a little time; and then be for ever either happy or miserable.

VI. He exhorts them, therefore, to live orderly, and to maintain a unity among each other.

VII. And that especially by a due subjection to their bishop and presbyters.

VIII. } He cautions them against false opinions, especially those of
IX. } Ebion and the Judaizing Christians.
X. }

XI. He apologises for this advice, which he gave not to reprove, but to forewarn them.

XII. Whose faith and piety he here greatly commends; and

XIII. Exhorts them to go on and increase in both.

XIV. He desires their prayers, both for himself and his church at Antioch.

XV. And then concludes all with the salutations of those who were present with him at the writing of this epistle.]

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE MAGNESIANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus,[1] to the blessed [church] by the grace of God the Father in Jesus Christ our Saviour; in whom I salute the church which is at Magnesia, near the Mæander, and wish it all joy in God the Father and in Jesus Christ.

[1] *Theophorus.* "This name which the saint gives to himself may," says Archbishop Wake, "be expounded after a different manner, and signify either *a person carried by God*, or one who *carries God in his breast.* And in both these significations we find this name to have been given to this holy man.

"For, first, as to the former signification, we are told by some of the writers of his life that St Ignatius was the child whom our blessed Saviour took in His arms and set before His disciples as a pattern of humility, when He told them that 'unless they should be converted, and become as little children, they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of God;' and that from thence he took the name of Theophorus, one who was borne or carried by God. And thus not only Metaphrastes and Nicephorus among the Greeks, but, as our own learned Bishop Usher tells us, 'some Syriac writers, more ancient than they, both interpret this name, and give an account of its being attributed to this blessed martyr.'

"But, as stories of this kind seldom lose in the relation, so we find the Latins making a farther improvement of the present fable. For having confirmed the truth of what these men had before observed, of St Ignatius being taken up by our Saviour into His arms, they add that for this reason the apostles, when they made him bishop of Antioch, durst not lay their hands upon him, 'he having been before both commended by our Saviour Christ, and sanctified by His touching of him.'

"There is so much of romance in all the latter part of this story, and so little grounds for the former, that I shall not need to spend any time in the confuting of either. It is enough that St Chrysostom has assured us that this holy man never saw our Lord, and that all the other ancient

When I heard of your well-ordered love and charity in God, being full of joy, I desired much to speak unto you in the faith of Jesus Christ. For having been thought worthy to obtain a most excellent name in the bonds which I carry about, I salute the churches; wishing in them a union both of the body and spirit of Jesus Christ, our eternal life: as also of faith and charity, to which nothing is preferred; but especially of Jesus and the Father; in whom, if we undergo all the injuries of the prince of this present world and escape, we shall enjoy God.

II. Seeing then I have been judged worthy to see you by Damas, your most excellent bishop; and by your very worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and by my fellow-servant Sotio, the deacon, in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject unto his bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ; I determined to write unto you.

III. Wherefore it will become you also not to use your bishop too familiarly upon the account of his youth, but to

writers are silent as to this particular, and therefore the fable, if not destitute of all probability, yet at least wants any good authority to support it; and, as our learned Bishop Pearson very reasonably conjectures, was first started about the time of our eighth general council by the party of that Ignatius who was then set up in opposition to Photius, and from thence derived both to Anastasius among the Latins, and to Metaphrastes among the Greeks.

"To pass, then, from this fabulous account of this title, let us come to the consideration of the true import of it. Now, for that as we cannot have any better, so neither need we desire any other account than what this holy man himself gave the emperor of that name. When being asked by him, 'Who was Theophorus?' he replied, 'He who has Christ in his breast.' And in this sense was this name commonly used among the ancients, as has been shown in a multitude of examples by Bishop Pearson in his elaborate vindication of St Ignatius's epistles. I shall offer only one of them, that of St Cyril, who anathematizes those who should call our Saviour Christ, Theophorus, 'lest,' says he, 'he should thereby be understood to have been no other than one of the saints.'

"It remains, then, that Ignatius was called Theophorus for the same reason that any other divine or excellent person might have been so called; namely, upon the account of his admirable piety; because his soul was full of the love of God, and sanctified with an extraordinary portion of the Divine grace; as both his life showed, and the earnest desire he had to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and his joy when he saw himself approaching towards it; and (to mention no more) his constancy in his last and most terrible conflict with the wild beasts, will not suffer us to doubt."

yield all reverence to him according to the power of God the Father—as also I perceive that your holy presbyters do—not considering his age, which indeed to appearance is young, but as becomes those who are prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the bishop of us all. It will, therefore, behove you, with all sincerity, to obey your bishop in honour of Him whose pleasure it is that ye should do so, because he that does not do so deceives not the bishop whom he sees, but affronts Him that is invisible: for whatsoever of this kind is done, it reflects not upon man, but upon God, who knows the secrets of our hearts.

IV. It is therefore fitting that we should not only be called Christians, but be so. As some call, indeed, their governor bishop; but yet do all things without him; but I can never think that such as these have a good conscience, seeing they are not gathered together thoroughly according to God's commandment.

V. Seeing then all things have an end, there are these two indifferently set before us, death and life: and every one shall depart unto his proper place. For there are two sorts of coins, the one of God, the other of the world; and each of these has its proper inscription engraven upon it. So also is it here. The unbelievers are of this world; but the faithful, through charity, have the character of God the Father by Jesus Christ: by whom if we are not readily disposed to die, after the likeness of His passion, His life is not in us.

VI. Forasmuch, therefore, as I have in the persons beforementioned, seen all of you in faith and charity, I exhort you, that ye study to do all things in a divine concord; your bishop presiding in the place of God; your presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles; and your deacons, most dear to me, being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all ages, and appeared in the end to us. Wherefore, taking the same holy course, see that ye all reverence one another; and let no one look upon his neighbour after the flesh; but do you all mutually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let there be nothing that may be able to make a division among you; but be ye united to your bishop, and those who preside over you, to be your pattern and direction in the way to immortality.

VII. As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father being united to Him[1]—neither by Himself, nor yet by His apostles—so neither do ye any thing without your bishop and presbyters; neither endeavour to let any thing appear rational to yourselves apart; but, being come together into the same place, have one common[2] prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in charity and in joy undefiled. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is better.—Wherefore come ye all together as unto one temple of God; as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ who proceeded from one Father,[3] and exists in one, and is returned to one.

VIII. Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable; for if we still continue to live according to the Jewish law, we do confess ourselves not to have received grace. For even the most holy prophets lived according to Christ Jesus: and for this cause were they persecuted, being inspired by His grace, to convince the unbelievers and disobedient that there is one God who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son; who is His eternal word[4] (not coming forth from silence), who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.

IX. Wherefore, if they who were brought up in these ancient laws came nevertheless to the newness of hope, no longer observing sabbaths, but keeping the Lord's day—in which also our life is sprung up by Him, and through His death, whom yet some deny; by which mystery we have been brought to believe, and therefore wait that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only master—how shall we be able to live different from Him, whose disciples the very prophets themselves being, did by the Spirit expect Him as their master. And therefore, He whom they justly waited for, being come, raised them up from the dead.[5]

X. Let us not then be insensible of His goodness; for should He have dealt with us according to our works, we had not now had a being. Wherefore, being become His disciples, let us learn to live according to the rules of Christianity: for whosoever is called by any other name besides this, he is not of God. Lay aside, therefore, the old, and sour, and evil leaven; and be ye changed into the new

[1] John x. 30; xiv. 11, 12; xvii. 21, 22. [2] Eph. iv. 3-6.
[3] John xvi. 28. [4] John i. 1. [5] Matt. xxvii. 52.

leaven, which is Jesus Christ. Be ye salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted; for by your Saviour ye shall be judged. It is absurd to name Jesus Christ, and to Judaize. For the Christian religion did not embrace the Jewish, but the Jewish the Christian; that so every tongue that believed might be gathered together unto God.

XI. These things, my beloved, I write unto you, not that I know of any one among you that lie under this error; but, as one of the least among you, I am desirous to forewarn you that ye fall not into the snares of vain doctrine, but that ye be fully instructed in the birth, and suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our hope; which was fully accomplished in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate, and that most truly and certainly; and from which God forbid that any among you should be turned aside.

XII. May I, therefore, have joy of you in all things, if I shall be worthy of it. For though I am bound, yet I am not worthy to be compared to one of you that are at liberty. I know that ye are not puffed up; for ye have Jesus Christ in your hearts. And especially when I commend you, I know that ye are ashamed; as it is written, "The just man condemneth himself."[1]

XIII. Study therefore to be confirmed in the doctrine of our Lord, and of His apostles, that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may prosper both in body and spirit—in faith and charity—in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Holy Spirit—in the beginning and in the end; together with your most worthy bishop, and the well-wrought spiritual crown of your presbytery, and your deacons which are according to God. Be subject to your bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father according to the flesh; and the apostles both to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost; that so ye may be united both in body and spirit.[2]

XIV. Knowing you to be full of God, I have the more briefly exhorted you. Be mindful of me in your prayers, that I may attain unto God; and of the church that is in Syria, from which I am not worthy to be called; for I stand in need of your joint prayers in God, and of your charity, that the church which is in Syria may be thought worthy to be nourished by your church.

[1] Prov. xviii. 17. [2] Eph. iii. 4.

XV. The Ephesians from Smyrna salute you (from which place I write unto you, being present here to the glory of God, in like manner as you are, who have in all things refreshed me, together with Polycarp, the bishop of the Smyrnæans. The rest of the churches, in the honour of Jesus Christ, salute you. Farewell, and be ye strengthened in the concord of God, enjoying His inseparable spirit which is Jesus Christ.

To the Magnesians.

EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE TRALLIANS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

TRALLES, like Magnesia, was a city on the River Mæander. It is still a handsome town, called Aidin Güsel-Hissar, with a population of 40,000 persons, and produces abundance of figs and raisins for the Smyrna market, being connected with that city by railway. Archbishop Wake gives the following as the contents :—

I. Salutation. He acknowledges the coming of their bishop, and his receipt of their charity by him.

II. He commends them for their orderly subjection to their bishops, priests, and deacons ; and exhorts them to continue in it.

III. He enforces the same exhortation, commends their bishop, and excuses his not writing more fully to them of this matter ;

IV. Which he does not, lest he should seem to take too much upon him, and be too much exalted in his own conceit, which would be very dangerous to him, who is afraid even of his over-great desire to suffer, lest it should be prejudicial to him.

V. Another reason why he did not write more largely to them was, that at present they were not able to bear it.

VI. He warns them against heretics who poison the sound word of Christ ; and

VII. Exhorts them, by humility of mind, and unity with the church, to guard themselves against them :

VIII. And this he does, not that he knows of any present need they had of his advice, but to prevent any mischief from falling upon them :

IX. To which end, he briefly sets before them the true doctrine concerning Christ ;

X. And particularly exposes the error of some, who taught that He seemed only to die, but did not really suffer.

XI. From these he would have them flee.

XII. He returns again to his exhortation of them to unity; and desires their prayers, of which he was much in need;

XIII. Which also he begs for his church at Antioch. And having given them the salutations of those who were with him, and once more exhorted them to due submission to their bishop, &c., he concludes.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE TRALLIANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the holy church which is at Tralles in Asia, beloved of God the Father of Jesus Christ; elect, and worthy of God, having peace through the flesh, and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ, our hope in the resurrection which is by Him: which also I salute in its fulness, continuing in the apostolical character; wishing all joy and happiness unto it.

I have heard of your blameless and constant disposition through patience, which not only appears in your outward conversation, but is naturally rooted and grounded in you; in like manner as Polybius, your bishop, has declared unto me, who came to me to Smyrna, by the will of God and Jesus Christ; and so rejoiced together with me in my bonds for Jesus Christ, that in effect I saw your whole church in him. Having therefore received the testimony of your good will towards me for God's sake, by him, I seemed to find you, as also I knew that ye were the followers of God.

II. For whereas ye are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, that so believing in His death, ye might escape death. It is therefore necessary, that as ye do, so without your bishop you should do nothing; also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, our hope; in whom, if we walk, we shall be found in Him. The deacons, also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means

please all: for they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God. Wherefore they must avoid all offences as they would do fire.

III. In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the Father; and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God, and college of the apostles. Without these there is no church. Concerning all which I am persuaded that ye think after the very same manner: for I have received, and even now have with me, the pattern of your love, in your bishop, whose very look is instructive, and whose mildness powerful; whom, I am persuaded, the very atheists themselves cannot but reverence. But because I have a love towards you, I will not write any more sharply unto you about this matter, though I very well might; but now I have done so, lest, being a condemned man, I should seem to prescribe to you as an apostle.

IV. I have great knowledge in God; but I refrain myself, lest I should perish in my boasting. For now I ought the more to fear, and not hearken to those that would puff me up; for they that speak to me in my praise chasten me: for I indeed desire to suffer, but I cannot tell whether I am worthy so to do. And this desire, though to others it does not appear, yet to myself it is for that very reason the more violent. I have, therefore, need of moderation, by which the prince of this world is destroyed.

V. Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear lest I should harm you, who are yet but babes in Christ (excuse me this care); and lest, perchance, not being able to receive them ye should be choked with them. For even I myself, although I am in bonds, yet am I not therefore able to understand heavenly things—as the places of the angels, and the several companies of them, under their respective princes—things visible and invisible;—but in these I am yet a learner. For many things are wanting to us, that we come not short of God.

VI. I exhort you, therefore, or rather not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, that ye use none but Christian nourishment, abstaining from pasture which is of another kind; I mean heresy. For they that are heretics confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their own poison, whilst they seem worthy of belief, as men give a deadly potion mixed

with sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his own death.

VII. Wherefore guard yourselves against such persons: and that you will do if you are not puffed up; but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your bishop, and from the commands of the apostles. He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is, that does any thing without the bishop, and presbyters, and deacons, is not pure in his conscience.

VIII. Not that I know there is anything of this nature among you; but I forearm you, as being greatly beloved by me, foreseeing the snares of the devil. Wherefore putting on meekness, renew yourselves in faith, that is, the flesh of the Lord; and in charity, that is, the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no man have any grudge against his neighbour. Give no occasion to the Gentiles, lest, by means of a few foolish men, the whole congregation of God be evil spoken of: for woe to that man through whose vanity my name[1] is blasphemed by any.

IX. Stop your ears, therefore, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, of the Virgin Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink; was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; was truly crucified and dead; both those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, being spectators of it. Who was also truly raised from the dead by His Father, after the manner as He will also raise up us who believe in Him, by Christ Jesus, without whom we have no true life.

X. But if as some who are atheists—that is to say, infidels—pretend that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), why then am I bound? why do I desire to fight with beasts? Therefore do I die in vain; therefore I will not speak falsely against the Lord.

XI. Flee, therefore, these evil sprouts which bring forth deadly fruit, of which if any one taste, he shall presently die. For these are not the plants of the Father; seeing, if they were, they would appear to be the branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible, by which He invites you through His passion, who are members of Him. For the head cannot be without its members, God having promised a union, that is, Himself.

[1] Isa. lii. 5.

XII. I salute you from Smyrna, together with the churches of God that are present with me, who have refreshed me in all things, both in the flesh and in the spirit. My bonds, which I carry about me, for the sake of Christ (beseeching Him that I may attain unto God), exhort you, that you continue in concord among yourselves, and in prayer with one another; for it becomes every one of you, especially the presbyters, to refresh the bishop, to the honour of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the apostles. I beseech you, that you hearken to me in love, that I may not, by those things which I write, rise up in witness against you. Pray also for me, who, through the mercy of God, stand in need of your prayers, that I may be worthy of the portion which I am about to obtain, that I be not found a reprobate.

XIII. The love of those who are at Smyrna and Ephesus, salute you. Remember in your prayers the church of Syria from which I am not worthy to be called, being one of the least of it. Fare ye well in Jesus Christ, being subject to your bishop as to the command of God, and so likewise to the presbytery. Love every one his brother with an unfeigned heart. My soul be your expiation not only now, but when I shall have attained unto God; for I am yet under danger. But the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ, to fulfil both mine and your petition, in whom may we be found unblamable.

To the Trallians.

EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE ROMANS.

CONTENTS.

I. Salutation. He testifies his desire to come unto them; and his hopes of suffering for Christ unless they prevent it,—

II. Which he earnestly entreats them not to do;

III. But rather to pray for him, that God should strengthen him to the combat unto which He had called him.

IV. He expresses the great desire he had to suffer martyrdom.

V. VI. And the mighty advantage it would be to him so to do;

VII. VIII. And therefore again entreats them, that they would not do any thing to prevent it.

IX. He desires their prayers for his church at Antioch; and expresses the kindness of the Christians to him on his way to them:

X. And then concludes, with his recommendations of those who came from Syria with him, and were gone before to Rome, to their favourable acceptance.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE ROMANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the church which has obtained mercy from the Majesty of the Most High Father, and His only begotten son Jesus Christ; beloved, and illuminated through the will of Him who willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, and which I salute in the name of Jesus Christ [as being] united both in flesh and spirit to all His commands, and filled with the grace of God [all joy] in Jesus Christ our God.

Forasmuch as I have at last obtained, through my prayers to God, to see your faces, which I much desired to do, being bound in Christ Jesus, I hope ere long to salute you, if it shall be the will of God to grant me to attain unto the end I long for. For the beginning is well-disposed, if I shall but have grace, without hindrance, to receive what is appointed for me. But I fear your love, lest it do me an injury; for it is easy for you to do what you please; but it will be hard for me to attain unto God, if you spare me.

II. But I would not that ye should please men, but God; whom also ye do please. For neither shall I ever hereafter have such an opportunity of going unto God; nor will you, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to a better work. For if you shall be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God; but if you shall love my body, I shall have my course again to run. Wherefore ye cannot do me a greater kindness than to suffer me to be sacrificed unto God, now that the altar is already prepared; that when ye shall be gathered

together in love, ye may give thanks to the Father, through Christ Jesus, that He has vouchsafed to bring a bishop of Syria unto you, being called from the east unto the west. For it is good for me to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again unto Him.

III. Ye have never envied any one; ye have taught others. I would therefore that ye should now do those things yourselves, which in your instructions you have prescribed to others. Only pray for me, that God would give me both inward and outward strength, that I may not only say, but will; nor be only called a Christian, but be found one. For if I shall be found a Christian, I may then deservedly be called one, and be thought faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing is good that is seen: for even our God Jesus Christ, now that He is in the Father, does so much the more appear. A Christian is not a work of opinion, but of greatness of mind (especially when he is hated by the world).

IV. I write to the churches, and signify to them all, that I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that you show not an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to be food to the wild beasts, by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God; and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather encourage the beasts, that they may become my sepulchre, and may leave nothing of my body; that being dead, I may not be troublesome to any: then shall I be truly the disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Pray therefore unto Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be made the sacrifice of God. I do not, as Peter and Paul, command you. They were apostles, I a condemned man; they were free, but I am even to this day a servant. But if I shall suffer, I shall then become the freeman of Jesus Christ, and shall rise free. And now, being in bonds, I learn not to desire any thing.

V. From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by sea and land, both night and day; being bound to ten leopards; that is to say, to such a band of soldiers, who, though treated with all manner of kindness are the worse for it. But I am the more instructed by their injuries; "yet

am I therefore justified."[1] May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; which also I wish may exercise all their fierceness upon me: and whom, for that end I will encourage, that they may be sure to devour me, and not serve me as they have done some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But and if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it. Pardon me in this matter; I know what is profitable for me. Now I begin to be a disciple;[2] nor shall[3] anything move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. Let fire and the cross; let the companies of wild beasts; let breakings of bones and tearing of members; let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me; only let me enjoy Jesus Christ.

VI. All the ends of the world, and the kingdoms of it, will profit me nothing: I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule to the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us; Him I desire who rose again for us. This is the gain that is laid up for me. Pardon me, my brethren; ye shall not hinder me from living: [nor, seeing I desire to go to God, may you separate me from Him for the sake of this world; nor seduce me by any of the desires of it]. Suffer me to enter into pure light; where being come, I shall be indeed the servant of God. Permit me to imitate the passion of my God. If any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire; and let him have compassion on me, as knowing how I am straitened.

VII. The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my resolution towards my God. Let none of you, therefore, help him: rather do ye join with me, that is, with God. Do not speak with Jesus Christ, and yet covet the world. Let not envy dwell with you; no, not though I myself, when I shall be come unto you, should exhort you to it; yet do not ye hearken to me, but rather believe what I now write to you. For though I am alive at the writing this, yet my desire is to die. My love is crucified; [and the fire that is within me does not desire any water; but being alive and springing with me, says], Come to the Father. I take no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 4. [2] Luke xiv. 27. [3] Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Christ, [of the seed of David; and the drink that I long for] is His blood, which is incorruptible love.

VIII. I have no desire to live any longer after the manner of men; neither shall I, if you consent. Be ye therefore willing, that ye yourselves also may be pleasing to God. I exhort you in a few words; I pray you believe me. Jesus Christ will show you that I speak truly. My mouth is without deceit, and the Father hath truly spoken by it. Pray therefore for me, that I may accomplish what I desire. I have not written to you after the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, ye have loved me; but if I shall be rejected, ye have hated me.

IX. Remember in your prayers the Church of Syria, which now enjoys God for its shepherd instead of me: let Jesus Christ only oversee it, and your charity. But I am even ashamed to be reckoned as one of them: for neither am I worthy, being the least among them, and as one born out of due season.[1] But through mercy I have obtained to be somebody, if I shall get unto God. My spirit salutes you; and the charity of the churches that have received me in the name of Jesus Christ; not as a passenger: for even they that were not near to me in the way have gone before me to the next city to meet me.

X. These things I write to you from Smyrna, by the most worthy of the Church of Ephesus. There is now with me, together with many others, Crocus, most beloved of me. As for those which are come from Syria, and are gone before me to Rome, to the glory of God, I suppose you are not ignorant of them. Ye shall therefore signify to them that I draw near, for they are all worthy both of God and of you: whom it is fit that you refresh in all things. This have I written to you, the day before the ninth of the calends of September. Be strong unto the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ.

To the Romans.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE PHILADELPHIANS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[PHILADELPHIA, an important city of Lydia, is one of the Seven Churches to which St John was commanded by our Lord to write from Patmos. It still possesses a considerable Christian Church in the midst of the Turkish darkness, which has settled down upon the greater part of the once flourishing country.]

CONTENTS.

I. Salutation. He begins with a very great commendation of their bishop, whom they had sent unto him.

II. He warns them against divisions; and exhorts them to stick close to their bishop, as the best means to avoid falling into errors and false doctrines;

III. IV. Which exhortation he again enforces, and shows them the danger of following any persons, to the making of a schism in the church.

V. He excuses the length of this advice, which proceeded from his love towards them; desires their prayers; and shows how the holy men under the law, as well as since under the gospel, were all united in Christ:

VI. Yet this must not prompt them to receive their doctrine who would tempt them to Judaize.

VII. He declares what his own conduct had been whilst he was amongst them;

VIII. IX. And exhorts them, after his example, to maintain a pure doctrine, in unity with one another.

X. He recounts to them how he had heard that the persecution was stopped in his church at Antioch; and directs them to send some messenger thither to congratulate with them thereupon.

XI. He tells them what persons were still with him; and thanks them for the kind entertainment they gave to some of them: and so concludes with the common salutation of those who were present at his writing of this epistle to them.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE PHILADELPHIANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia in Asia ; which has obtained mercy, being fixed in the concord of God, and rejoicing evermore in the passion of our Lord, and being fulfilled in all mercy through His resurrection : which also I salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, which is our eternal and undefiled joy, especially if they are at unity with the bishop and presbyters who are with Him, and the deacons appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ ; whom He has settled according to His own will in all firmness by His Holy Spirit.

Which bishop I know obtained that great ministry among you, not of himself, neither by men, nor out of vain glory, but by the love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ; whose moderation I admire, who by His silence is able to do more than others with all their vain talk, for He is fitted to the commands as the harp to its strings. Wherefore my soul esteems his mind toward God most happy, knowing it to be fruitful in all virtue, and perfect; full of constancy, free from passion, and according to all the moderation of the living God.

II. Wherefore, as becomes the children both of the light and of truth, flee divisions and false doctrines : but where your shepherd is, there do ye, as sheep, follow after ; for there are many wolves who seem worthy of belief, that with a false pleasure lead captive those that run in the course of God ; but in your concord they shall find no place.

III. Abstain, therefore, from those evil herbs which Jesus

Christ does not dress; because such are not the plantation of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but rather all manner of purity. For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop. And as many as shall with repentance return into the unity of the church, even these shall also be the servants of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, brethren: if any one follows him that makes a schism in the church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God: if any one walks after any other opinion, he agrees not with the passion of Christ.

IV. Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake all of the same holy eucharist; for there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup, in the unity of His blood; one altar; as also there is one bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons, my fellow-servants; that so whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to the will of God.

V. My brethren, the love I have towards you makes me the more large; and having a great joy in you, I endeavour to secure you against danger; or rather not I, but Jesus Christ, in whom being bound, I the more fear, as being yet only on the way to suffering. But your prayer to God shall make me perfect, that I may attain to that portion which by God's mercy is allotted to me; fleeing to the gospel as to the flesh of Christ, and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the church. Let us also love the prophets, forasmuch as they also have led us to the gospel, and to hope in Christ, and to expect Him. In whom also believing, they were saved, in the unity of Jesus Christ; being holy men, worthy to be loved, and had in wonder, who have received testimony from Jesus Christ, and are numbered in the gospel of our common hope.

VI. But if any one shall preach the Jewish law unto you, hearken not unto him; for it is better to receive the doctrine of Christ from one that has been circumcised, than Judaism from one that has not. But if either the one or other do not speak concerning Christ Jesus, they seem to me to be but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked arts and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time, being oppressed by his cunning, ye grow cold in your charity. But come all

together into the same place, with an undivided heart. And I bless my God that I have a good conscience towards you, and that no one among you has whereof to boast, either openly or privately, that I have been burthensome to him in much or little. And I wish, to all amongst whom I have conversed, that it may not turn to a witness against them.

VII. For although some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the spirit, being from God, is not deceived: for it knows both whence it comes, and whither it goes, and reproves the secrets of the heart. I cried whilst I was among you, I spake with a loud voice,—Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons. Now some supposed that I spake this as foreseeing the division that should come among you. But He is my witness for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man: but the Spirit spake, saying on this wise:—Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; flee divisions; be the followers of Christ, as He was of the Father.

VIII. I therefore did as became me, as a man composed to unity: for where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not. But the Lord forgives all that repent, if they return to the unity of God, and to the council of the bishop. For I trust in the grace of Jesus Christ that He will free you from every bond. Nevertheless I exhort you that you do nothing out of strife, but according to the instruction of Christ; because I have heard of some who say, Unless I find it written in the originals, I will not believe it to be written in the gospel. And when I said, it is written, they answered what lay before them in their corrupted copies. But to me, Jesus Christ is instead of all the uncorrupted monuments in the world, together with those undefiled monuments, His cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.

IX. The priests, indeed, are good; but much better is the high priest, to whom the Holy of Holies has been committed, and who alone has been entrusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father, by which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets enter in, as well as the apostles and the church. And all these things tend to the unity which is of God. Howbeit the gospel has somewhat in it far above all other dispensations; namely, the appearance of our

Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, His passion, and resurrection. For the beloved prophets referred to Him : but the gospel is the perfection of incorruption. All, therefore, together are good, if ye believe with charity.

X. Now, as concerning the Church of Antioch, which is in Syria : seeing I am told that through your prayers, and the bowels which ye have towards it in Jesus Christ, it is in peace, it will become you, as the Church of God, to ordain some deacon to go to them thither as the ambassador of God ; that he may rejoice with them when they meet together, and glorify God's name. Blessed be that man, in Jesus Christ, who shall be found worthy of such a ministry ; and ye yourselves also shall be glorified. Now, if ye be willing, it is not impossible for you to do this for the sake of God ; as also the other neighbouring churches have sent them,—some bishops, some priests and deacons.

XI. As concerning Philo, the deacon of Cilicia, a most worthy man, he still ministers unto me in the word of God, together with Rheus of Agathopolis, a singular good person, who has followed me even from Syria, not regarding his life : these also bear witness unto you. And I myself give thanks to God for you that ye receive them as the Lord shall receive you. But for those that dishonoured them, may they be forgiven through the grace of Jesus Christ. The charity of the brethren that are at Troas salutes you, from whence also I now write by Burrhus, who was sent together with me by those of Ephesus and Smyrna for respect sake. May our Lord Jesus Christ honour them, in whom they hope, both in flesh, and soul, and spirit,—in faith, in love, in unity. Farewell in Christ Jesus, our common hope.

ST IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE TO THE SMYRNÆANS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[SMYRNA, that one of the Seven Churches which received the highest praise in the Epistles sent by the Lord through St John, is still the most flourishing city in the Levant, with a population of 150,000.]

CONTENTS.

I. Salutation. He declares the joy he had to hear of their firmness in the gospel; the substance of which, as to what concerns the person of Christ, he briefly repeats to them:

II. And this against such as pretend that Christ suffered only in show, and not really. Against these,

III. He assures them that he knew Christ was a true man, even after His resurrection, and did give manifest proofs to His disciples of His being such.

IV. He exhorts them, therefore, to have nothing to do with those heretics whom he here opposes; nor believe that he would suffer so much for the faith of Christ, unless he were very sure of the truth of it.

V. He shows them, farther, the danger of the doctrine before mentioned; and how they who held it did in effect deny Christ.

VI. How dangerous this is! And how different those who maintain this doctrine are, in all other respects, from the Church of Christ!

VII. That it will, therefore, become them to guard themselves against such persons.

VIII. To this end, he exhorts them to follow their bishop and pastors; but especially their bishop.

IX. He thanks them for their kindness to himself.

X. And to those that were with him, which God will reward.

XI. He acquaints them with the ceasing of the persecution at Antioch: he exhorts them to send a messenger thither, to congratulate with them on this occasion.

VIII. He concludes with his own salutation, and the remembrances of those that were with him, to them all in general, to several in particular.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO THE SMYRNÆANS.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ; which God hath mercifully blessed [1] with every good gift, being filled with faith and charity, so that it is wanting in no gift; most worthy of God, and fruitful in saints; the Church which is at Smyrna in Asia, all joy through his immaculate Spirit, and the word of God.

I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom: for I have observed that you are settled in an immovable faith as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are confirmed in love through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded of those things which relate unto our Lord, who truly was of the race of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God according to the will and power of God; truly born of the Virgin, and baptized of John: that so all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him.[2] He was also truly crucified by Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, being nailed for us in the flesh, by the fruits of which we are saved, even by the most blessed passion, that He might set up a token for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faithful servants, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, in one body of His Church.

II. Now all these things He suffered for us, that we might be saved. And He suffered truly, as He also truly raised up Himself; and not, as some unbelievers say, that He only

[1] Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 25. [2] Matt. iii. 15.

seemed to suffer, they themselves only seeming to be. And as they believe, so it shall happen unto them: when being divested of the body, they shall become mere spirits.

III. But I know, that even after His resurrection, He was in the flesh; and I believe that He is still so. And when He came to those who were with Peter, He said unto them, "Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal demon." And straightway they felt Him and believed; being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause they despised death, and were found to be above it. But after His resurrection He did eat and drink with them, as He was flesh; although as to His spirit He was united to the Father.

IV. Now these things, beloved, I put you in mind of, not questioning but that you yourselves also believe that they are so. But I arm you beforehand against certain beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but if it be possible must not meet with. Only you must pray for them, that if it be the will of God, they may repent; which yet will be very hard. But of this our Lord Jesus Christ has the power, who is our true life. For if all those things were done only in show by our Lord, then do I also seem only to be bound. And why have I given up myself to death, to the fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? But now the nearer I am to the sword, the nearer I am to God: when I shall come among the wild beasts, I shall come to God. Only, in the name of Jesus Christ I undergo all, to suffer together with Him; He who was made a perfect man strengthening me.

V. Whom some, not knowing, do deny; or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death, rather than of the truth. Whom neither the prophecies, nor the law of Moses have persuaded, nor the gospel itself, even to this day, nor the sufferings of every one of us: for they think also the same things of us. For what does a man profit me, if he shall praise me, and blaspheme my Lord; not confessing that He was truly made man? Now he that doth not say this, does in effect deny Him, and is in death. But for the names of such as do this, they being unbelievers, I thought it not fitting to write them unto you. Yea, God forbid that I should make any mention of them, till they shall repent to a true belief of Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

VI. Let no man deceive himself: both the things which are

in heaven, and the glorious angels and princes, whether visible or invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, it shall be to them to condemnation. "He that is able to receive this, let him receive it."[1] Let no man's place or state in the world puff him up: that which is worth all is faith and charity, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion from us, as to what concerns the grace of Jesus Christ, which is come unto us, how contrary they are to the design of God! They have no regard to charity; no care of the widow, the fatherless, and the oppressed; of the bound or free, of the hungry or thirsty.

VII. They abstain from the eucharist, and from the public offices, because they confess not the eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised again from the dead. And for this cause, contradicting the gift of God, they die in their disputes. But much better would it be for them to receive it, that they might one day rise through it. It will therefore become you to abstain from such persons, and not to speak with them, neither in private, nor in public; but to hearken to the prophets, and especially to the gospel, in which both Christ's passion is manifested unto us, and His resurrection perfectly declared. But flee all divisions as the beginning of evils.

VIII. See that ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ the Father; and the presbytery, as the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as the command of God. Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the church separately from the bishop. Let that eucharist be looked upon as well established, which is either offered by the bishop, or by him to whom the bishop has given his consent. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people also be; as where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not lawful without the bishop, neither to baptize, nor to celebrate the holy communion; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing unto God; that so whatever is done may be sure and well done.

IX. For what remains, it is very reasonable that we should repent, whilst there is yet time to return unto God. It is a good thing to have a due regard both to God and to the bishop; he that honours the bishop shall be honoured of God.

[1] Matt. xix. 12.

But he that does anything without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil. Let all things, therefore, abound to you in charity; seeing ye are worthy. Ye have refreshed me in all things; so shall Jesus Christ you. Ye have loved me, both when I was present with you, and now, being absent, ye cease not to do so. May God be your reward; for whom whilst ye undergo all things, ye shall attain unto Him.

X. Ye have done well in that ye have received Philo, and Rheus Agathopus, who followed me for the word of God, as the deacons of Christ our God. Who also gave thanks unto the Lord for you, forasmuch as ye have refreshed them in all things. Nor shall anything that you have done be lost to you. My soul be for yours, and my bonds, which ye have not despised nor been ashamed of. Wherefore neither shall Jesus Christ, our perfect faith, be ashamed of you.

XI. Your prayer is come to the Church of Antioch, which is in Syria; from whence being sent, bound with chains, becoming God, I salute the churches; being not worthy to be called from thence, as being the least among them. Nevertheless, by the will of God, I have been thought worthy of this honour; not for that I think I have deserved it, but by the grace of God; which I wish may be perfectly given unto me, and through your prayers I may attain unto God. And therefore that your work may be fully accomplished both upon earth and in heaven, it will be fitting, and for the honour of God, that your Church appoint some worthy delegate, who being come as far as Syria, may rejoice, together with them, that they are in peace; and that they are again restored to their former state, and have again received their proper body. Wherefore I should think it a worthy action to send some one from you with an epistle to congratulate with them their peace in God; and that through your prayers they have now gotten to their harbour. For inasmuch as ye are perfect yourselves, you ought to think those things that are perfect. For when you are desirous to do well, God is ready to enable you thereunto.

XII. The love of the brethren that are at Troas salute you; from whence I write to you by Burrhus, whom you sent with me, together with the Ephesians, your brethren; and who has in all things refreshed me. And I would to God that all would imitate him, as being a pattern of the ministry of God.

May His grace fully reward him! I salute your very worthy bishop, and your venerable presbytery; and your deacons, my fellow-servants, and all of you in general, and every one in particular, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in His flesh and blood; in His passion and resurrection, both fleshly and spiritually; and in the unity of God with you. Grace be with you, and patience, for evermore.

XIII. I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children; and the virgins that are called widows. Be strong in the power of the Holy Ghost. Philo, who is present with me, salutes you. I salute the house of Tavias, and pray that it may be strengthened in faith and charity, both of flesh and spirit. I salute Alcé, my well-beloved, together with the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutechnus, and all by name. Farewell in the grace of God.

To the Smyrnæans from Troas.

ST IGNATIUS'S EPISTLE TO ST POLYCARP.

CONTENTS.

I. Salutation. He blesses God for the firm establishment of Polycarp in all piety, and gives him many particular directions for his improvement in it.

II. But especially with relation to the church over which he was bishop.

III. IV. He continues his advice to him; and

V. Teaches him what advice he should give to others:

VI. In which he continues; and especially enforces unity among themselves, and subjection to their bishop.

VII. He recounts to Polycarp the peace of his church in Syria; and directs him to appoint some messenger to go to Antioch to rejoice with them on that occasion.

VIII. He desires Polycarp to write to the same effect to the neighbouring churches, which he had not himself time to do.

And then concludes all with his salutation both to Polycarp and to several of the church of Smyrna, by name.

THE EPISTLE OF ST IGNATIUS TO ST POLYCARP.

I. IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp, bishop of the church which is at Smyrna; their overseer, but rather himself overlooked by God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; all happiness.

Having known that thy mind toward God is fixed, as it were, upon an immovable rock, I exceedingly give thanks that I have been thought worthy to behold thy blessed face, in which may I always rejoice in God. Wherefore, I beseech thee by the grace of God, with which thou art clothed, to press forward in thy course, and to exhort all others, that they may be saved. Maintain thy place, with all care both of flesh and spirit:[1] make it thy endeavour to preserve unity, than which nothing is better. Bear with all men, even as the Lord with thee. Support all in love, as also thou dost. "Pray without ceasing:" ask more understanding than what thou already hast. Be watchful, having thy spirit always awake. Speak to every one according as God shall enable thee. Bear the infirmities of all, as a perfect combatant. Where the labour is great, the gain is the more.

II. If thou shalt love the good disciples, what thank is it? But rather do thou subject to thee those that are mischievous, in meekness. Every wound is not healed with the same plaster: if the accessions of the disease be vehement, mollify them with soft remedies: be in all things, "wise as a serpent, but harmless as a dove."[2] For this cause thou art composed of flesh and spirit, that thou mayest mollify those things that

[1] Vid. 1 Cor. vii. 34. [2] Matt. x. 16.

appear before thy face. And as for those that are not seen, pray to God that He would reveal them unto thee, that so thou mayst be wanting in nothing, but mayst abound in every gift. The times demand thee, as the pilots the winds, and he that is tossed in a tempest the haven where he would be, that thou mayst attain unto God. Be sober, as the combatant of God; the crown proposed to thee is immortality and eternal life, concerning which thou art also fully persuaded. I will be thy surety in all things, and my bonds, which thou hast loved.

III. Let not those that seem worthy of credit, but teach other doctrines, disturb thee. Stand firm and immovable as an anvil when it is beaten upon. It is the part of a brave combatant to be wounded, and yet to overcome. But especially we ought to endure all things for God's sake, that He may bear with us. Be every day better than other: consider the times; and expect Him, who is above all time, eternal, invisible, though for our sakes made visible; impalpable, and impassible, yet for us subjected to sufferings, enduring all manner of ways for our salvation.

IV. Let not the widows be neglected: be thou, after God, their guardian. Let nothing be done without thy knowledge and consent: neither do thou any thing but according to the will of God: as also thou dost, with all constancy. Let your assemblies be more full, inquire into all by name. Overlook not the men and maid-servants: neither let them be puffed up; but rather let them be the more subject,—to the glory of God, that they may obtain from Him a better liberty. Let them not desire to be set free at the public cost, that they be not slaves to their own lusts.

V. Flee evil arts; or, rather, make not any mention of them. Say to my sisters that they love the Lord; and be satisfied with their own husbands, both in the flesh and spirit. In like manner exhort my brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, that they love their wives, even as the Lord the Church. If any man can remain in a virgin state, to the honour of the flesh of Christ, let him remain without boasting: but if he boast, he is undone. And if he desire to be more taken notice of than the bishop, he is corrupted. But it becomes all such as are married, whether men or women, to come together with the consent of the bishop, that so their marriage

may be according to godliness, and not in lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God.

VI. Hearken unto the bishop, that God also may hearken unto you. My soul be security for them that submit to their bishop, with their presbyters, and deacons. And may my portion be together with theirs in God. Labour with one another; contend together, run together, suffer together, sleep together, and rise together; as the stewards, and assessors, and ministers of God. Please him under whom ye war, and from whom ye receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter; but let your baptism remain as your arms—your faith as your helmet—your charity as your spear--your patience as your whole armour. Let your works be your charge, that so you may receive a suitable reward. Be long-suffering, therefore, towards each other in meekness, as God is towards you. Let me have joy of you in all things.

VII. Now forasmuch as the Church of Antioch in Syria is, as I am told, in peace through your prayers, I also have been the more comforted, and without care in God—if so be that by suffering I shall attain unto God that, through your prayers, I may be found a disciple of Christ. It will be very fit, O most holy Polycarp, to call a select council, and choose some one whom ye particularly love, and who is patient of labour, that he may be the messenger of God; and that going unto Syria, he may glorify your incessant love to the praise of Christ. A Christian has not the power of himself, but must always be at leisure for God's service. Now this work is both God's and yours, when ye shall have perfected it. For I trust, through the grace of God, that ye are ready to every good work that is fitting for you in the Lord. Knowing, therefore, your earnest affection to the truth, I have exhorted you by these short letters.

VIII. But forasmuch as I have not been able to write to all the churches, because I must suddenly sail from Troas to Neapolis—(for so is the command of those to whose pleasure I am subject)—do you write to the churches that are near you, as being instructed in the will of God, that they also may do in like manner. Let those that are able send messengers, and let the rest send their letters by those who shall be sent by you; that you may be glorified to all eternity, of which you are worthy. I salute all by name, particularly the wife of Epi-

tropus, with all her house and children. I salute Attalus, my well-beloved. I salute him who shall be thought worthy to be sent by you into Syria. Let grace be ever with him, and with Polycarp, who sends him. I wish you all happiness in our God, Jesus Christ; in whom continue, in the unity and protection of God. I salute Alcé, my well-beloved. Farewell in the Lord.

To Polycarp.

A Relation of the Martyrdom of St Ignatius.

Translated from the Original Greek, published by Dr Grabe, in his "Spicileg. Patrum," tom. ii.[1]

I. WHEN Trajan, not long since, came to the Roman empire, Ignatius, the disciple of St John the apostle [and evangelist], a man in all things like unto the apostles, governed the Church of Antioch with all care; who being scarcely able to escape the storms of the many persecutions before under Domitian, as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, with his accustomed thoroughness, has discussed the question of the genuineness of this document, and has declared against it, first, on internal grounds. "The eighth chapter is not consistent with the genuine epistles, which imply that the saint visited Philadelphia, while the treatise before us implies that he came to Smyrna by sea. And the external evidence is defective, no author referring to this narrative earlier than the sixth century." But Bishop Lightfoot thinks it probable that the martyrologist has used an account really written by the saint's contemporaries, and added fictitious details of his own. The main fact, viz., that the saint was sent to Rome for martyrdom, is not questioned. The reason is thus discussed by Archbishop Wake :—

"Whatever the design of the emperor may have been in it, whether he intended to increase his sufferings by a journey so wearisome, and attended with so many bitter circumstances as that must needs have been to a person very probably at that time fourscore years of age; or whether he hoped by this means to have overcome his constancy, and to have drawn him away from his faith; or lastly, whether, as Metaphrastes tells

spiritual labour, withstood the raging floods; fearing lest they should sink those who either wanted courage, or were not well grounded in the faith.

II. Wherefore the persecution being at present somewhat abated, he rejoiced greatly at the tranquillity of his church; yet was troubled as to himself, that he had not attained to a true love of Christ, nor was come up to the pitch of a perfect disciple: for he thought that the confession which is made by martyrdom would bring him to a yet more close and intimate union with the Lord. Wherefore continuing a few years longer with the church, and after the manner of a divine lamp illuminating the hearts of the faithful by the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, he attained to what he had desired.

III. For Trajan, in the nineteenth year of his empire, being lifted up with his victory over the Scythians and Dacians, and many other nations, and thinking that the religious company of Christians was yet wanting to his absolute and universal dominion, and thereupon threatening them that they should be persecuted unless they would choose to worship the devil with all other nations, fear obliged all such as live religiously either to sacrifice or to die. Wherefore our brave soldier of Christ, being in fear for the Church of Antioch, was voluntarily brought before Trajan, who was at that time there, on his way to Armenia and the Parthians, against whom he was hastening.

IV. Being come into the presence of the emperor Trajan, the emperor asked him, saying, "What a wicked wretch art thou, thus to endeavour to transgress our commands, and to

us, upon his consulting with those of the senate who were with him, he was advised 'not to let him at Antioch, lest thereby he should raise his esteem the more among the people, and render him still more dear and desirable to them;' we cannot doubt but that God hereby designed to present to all the nations through which he was to pass a glorious instance of the power of his religion, that could enable this blessed martyr with so much constancy to despise all the violence of his enemies, and to be impatient after those trials which they hoped should have affrighted him into a base and degenerous compliance with their desires.

"This was indeed a triumph worthy of the Christian religion. Nor was it any small advantage to the churches at such a critical time to have their zeal awakened and their courage confirmed, both by the examples and exhortations of this great man, from Antioch even to Rome itself. And we are accordingly told with what mighty comfort and satisfaction they received his instructions, and, as the authors of his acts express it, 'rejoiced to partake in his spiritual gift.'"

persuade others to do likewise to their destruction?" Ignatius answered, "No one ought to call Theophorus after such a manner; forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if, because I am a trouble to those evil spirits, you call me wicked with reference to them, I confess the charge; for having [within me] Christ the heavenly king, I dissolve all the snares of the devils.

V. *Trajan* replied, "And who is Theophorus?"—*Ignatius.* "He who has Christ in his breast."—*Trajan.* "And do not we then seem to thee to have the gods within us, who fight for us against our enemies?"—*Ignat.* "You err, in that you call the evil spirits of the heathens, gods. 'For there is but one God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them;' and one Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whose kingdom may I enjoy."

VI. *Trajan.* "His kingdom you say who was crucified under Pontius Pilate."—*Ignat.* "His who crucified my sin, with the inventor of it; and has put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry Him in their heart."—*Trajan.* "Dost thou then carry Him who was crucified within thee?"—*Ignat.* "I do: for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'"[1]—Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him: "Forasmuch as Ignatius has confessed that he carries about within himself Him that was crucified, we command that he be carried, bound by soldiers, to the great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people."

VII. When the holy martyr heard this sentence, he cried out with joy, "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with thy apostle Paul." Having said this, he with joy put his bonds about him; and having first prayed for the church, and commended it with tears unto the Lord, he was hurried away, like a choice ram, the leader of a good flock, by the brutish soldiers, in order to his being carried to Rome, there to be devoured by the blood-thirsty beasts.

VIII. Wherefore with much readiness and joy, out of his desire to suffer, he left Antioch, and came to Seleucia; from whence he was to sail. And after a great deal of toil, being

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 16.

come to Smyrna, he left the ship with great gladness, and hastened to see the holy Polycarp, his fellow-scholar, who was bishop there; for they had both of them been formerly the disciples of St John.

IX. Being brought to him, and communicating to him some spiritual gifts, and glorying in his bonds, he entreated, first of all, the whole church (for the churches and cities of Asia attended this holy man by their bishops, and priests, and deacons, all hastening to him, if by any means they might receive some part of his spiritual gift), but more particularly Polycarp, to contend with God in his behalf; that being suddenly taken by the beasts from the world, he might appear before the face of Christ. And this he thus spake, and testified, extending so much his love for Christ as one who was about to receive heaven through his own good confession, and the earnest contention of those who prayed together with him; and to return a recompense to the churches, who came to meet him by their governors, he sent letters of thanks to them, which distilled spiritual grace, with prayer and exhortation. Seeing therefore all men so kindly affected towards him, and fearing lest the love of the brotherhood should prevent his hastening to the Lord, now that a fair door of suffering was opened to him, he wrote the epistle we here subjoin to the Romans. (See the epistle before.)

X. And having thus strengthened such of the brethren at Rome as were against his martyrdom, by this epistle, as he desired; setting sail from Smyrna (for he was pressed by the soldiers to hasten to the public spectacles at great Rome, that being delivered to the wild beasts in sight of the people of the Romans, he might receive the crown for which he strove), he came to Troas, from whence going on, being brought to Neapolis, he passed by Philippi through Macedonia, and that part of Epirus which is next to Epidamnus; having found a ship in one of the sea-ports, he sailed over the Adriatic sea; [and from thence entering into the Tyrrhene], and passing by several islands and cities, at length he saw Puteoli; which being showed to the holy man, he hastened to go forth, being desirous to walk from thence, in the way that Paul the apostle had gone;[1] but a violent wind arising, and driving on the ship, would not suffer him

[1] Acts xxviii. 13, 14.

so to do; wherefore, commending the love of the brethren in that place, he sailed forward.

XI. And the wind continuing favourable to us, in one day and a night, we indeed were unwillingly hurried on, as sorrowing to think of being separated from this holy martyr: but to him it happened justly according to his wish, that he might go the sooner out of the world, and attain unto the Lord, whom he loved. Wherefore, sailing into the Roman port, and those impure sports being almost at an end, the soldiers began to be offended at our slowness; but the bishop with great joy complied with their hastiness.

XII. Being therefore soon forced away from the port so called, we forthwith met the brethren (for the report of what concerned the holy martyr was spread abroad), who were full of fear and joy: for they rejoiced in that God had vouchsafed them the company of Theophorus, but were afraid, when they considered that such an one was brought thither to die. Now some of these he commanded to hold their peace who were the most zealous for his safety, and said, that "they would appease the people, that they should not desire the destruction of the just:" who presently knowing this by the spirit, and saluting all of them, he desired them that they would show a true love to him: disputing yet more with them than he had done in his epistle, and persuading them not to envy him who was hastening unto the Lord. And so, all the brethren kneeling down, he prayed to the Son of God, in behalf of the churches, that he would put a stop to the persecution, and continue the love of the brethren towards each other; which being done, he was with all haste led into the amphitheatre, and speedily, according to the command of Cæsar before given, thrown in, the end of the spectacles being at hand. For it was then a very solemn day, called in the Roman tongue the thirteenth of the calends of January; upon which the people were more than ordinarily wont to be gathered together. Thus was he delivered to the cruel beasts, near the temple, by wicked men; that so the desire of the holy martyr, Ignatius, might be accomplished; as it is written, "The desire of the righteous is acceptable;"[1] namely, that he might not be burthensome to any of the brethren, by the gathering of his

[1] Prov. x. 24.

relics, but might be wholly devoured by them; according as in his epistle he had before wished that so his end might be. For only the greater and harder of his holy bones remained; which were carried to Antioch, and there put up in a napkin, as an inestimable treasure left to the church by the grace which was in the martyr.

XIII. Now these things were done the thirteenth of the calends of January, that is the twentieth day of December; Sura and Synecius being the second time consuls of the Romans; of which we ourselves were eye-witnesses. And being the night following watching, with tears, in the house, praying to God with our bended knees, that He would give us, weak men, some assurance of what had been before done, —it happened, that falling into a slumber, some of us, on the sudden, saw the blessed Ignatius standing by us and embracing us; others beheld the blessed martyr praying for us; others, as it were, dropping with sweat, as if he were just come from his great labour, and standing by the Lord.

XIV. Which when we saw, being filled with joy, and comparing the visions of our dreams with one another, we glorified God, the giver of all good things; and being assured of the blessedness of the saint, we have made known unto you both the day and the time; that, being assembled together according to the time of his martyrdom, we may communicate with the combatant, and most valiant martyr of Christ, who trod under foot the devil, and perfected the course he had piously desired, in Christ Jesus our Lord; by whom, and with whom, all glory and power be to the Father, with the blessed Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE EPISTLES OF ST POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE

ON THE

EPISTLE OF ST POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

By Archbishop Wake.

OF THE TIME WHEN ST POLYCARP WROTE THIS EPISTLE—THAT ST POLYCARP WROTE SEVERAL OTHER PIECES—YET NOTHING OF HIS NOW REMAINING BUT ONLY THIS EPISTLE—WHETHER THIS EPISTLE HAS BEEN INTERPOLATED AS THOSE OF IGNATIUS WERE—THE LATTER PART OF IT VINDICATED AGAINST THE EXCEPTIONS OF MONS. DAILLÉ, AND SOME OTHERS—OF THE TRANSLATION OF IT INTO OUR OWN LANGUAGE BY DR CAVE—AND OF THE PRESENT EDITION OF IT.

1. THE next piece that follows in the present collection is the epistle of St Polycarp to the Philippians, written about, or a little after, the time that glorious martyr Ignatius suffered for the faith of Christ; as from several passages in the epistle itself may plainly be made to appear.

2. For, first, having in his ninth chapter exhorted the Philippians to "obey the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience," after the examples of those holy men whom they had seen among them, he particularly instances Ignatius as one of them. Now the Acts of the martyrdom of that holy bishop tell us that the time when they beheld his

"patience set forth before their eyes" was when he passed by them in chains to Rome, in order to his being cast to the wild beasts, according to the sentence pronounced upon him by the emperor Trajan: by consequence that this epistle must have been written some time after his condemnation.

3. But St Polycarp goes yet farther, and in the next words supposes that Ignatius might have been dead at the time that he wrote to them. For, enforcing his exhortation to them to follow the examples of Ignatius, and the rest of those excellent men whom he there names, he subjoins,—"Being confident of this, that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and are gone to the place that was due to them from the Lord, with whom also they suffered; for they loved not this present world, but Him who died and was raised again by God for us." In which words he evidently implies that Ignatius too, as well as the rest of those whom he there mentions, was by this time gone to the "place that was due to him from the Lord, upon the account of his sufferings;" and by consequence had finished his martyrdom.

4. It was, then, about the time of Ignatius's death that St Polycarp wrote this epistle to the Philippians. And yet that if this holy man had suffered, it was but a very little time that he had done so, as is clear from another passage of the same epistle, where he desires the Philippians to send him word "what they had heard with any certainty concerning Ignatius, and those that were with him." From whence it appears that, though he supposed that Ignatius by that time might have suffered, yet he had not received any certain account of it, but was still to learn the manner and circumstances of his passion.

5. Now this will lead us to a yet more exact conjecture of the time of St Polycarp's writing the following epistle, viz. that it must have been just about the time of St Ignatius's death: it being no way probable that, had Ignatius been any long time dead, so great a bishop, and so dear a friend of his as St Polycarp was, should have been still to learn the certainty of it.

6. And this may serve, by the way, not only to fix the time when this epistle was written, namely, at the end of the year of our Lord 116, or in the beginning of 117;[1] but also to show

[1 Bishop Lightfoot, however, thinks it more probable that the martyrdom of Ignatius may probably have been coincident with the persecution in Bithynia which Pliny records, and which was in A.D. 112.]

how groundless the exception of those men is against the authority of it, who pretend to find out a contradiction between the two passages I have now mentioned, and would from thence infer either the utter falseness of this whole epistle, or at least conclude that this latter part of it is none of Polycarp's, but added by some later hand, to give the greater credit to the epistles of St Ignatius, which they are resolved by all means to reject as none of his. For, indeed, were not men willing to be contentious, where is the contradiction they so much boast of between the two places I have before alleged? Is it that in the former of them he sets before them the sufferings of St Ignatius, and exhorts them to follow the example of his patience? But it is evident the sufferings he there speaks of were those which the Philippians had seen in him—the weight of his chains,—the hardships of his journey,—the rudeness of the soldiers that guarded him, and of which the blessed martyr himself complains, in one of his epistles; and, to add no more, the expectation of that cruel death he was suddenly to undergo.

7. But I suppose the contradiction lies in what follows, that in one place he speaks of him as if he had already suffered; and yet, in the other, desires the Philippians to send him word what they had heard of it. Now what is there in all this that does not very well agree together? St Polycarp, either by the computation of the arrival of Ignatius at Rome, or by the consideration of the solemn festival that was wont at that time to be held there, and at which it was usual to exhibit such kind of spectacles to the people,—or it may be, lastly, from the accounts which he had received of this holy martyr from some of those that were with him, did suppose, nay if you will, did not doubt, but that Ignatius was dead when he wrote his epistle to the Philippians. Yet, having not hitherto received any certain account of it, and not being absolutely sure whether he had suffered or not,—or, if he had, how he had been treated by his enemies, and how he had behaved himself in his last encounter with the beasts,—desires the Philippians, who were much nearer to Rome than he was, and might, therefore, very probably have heard much later from thence than he had done, to send him a certain account of what they knew as to this matter. What is there in all this, I do not say that looks like a contradiction, but that is not

very natural, and particularly most becoming the love and friendship of the blessed Polycarp towards him concerning whom he so diligently inquired? I am sure Photius, who had not only read this epistle, but transcribed this last passage out of it, though as severe a critic as any that have ever perused it since, saw no contradiction in it to anything that went before; for, if he had, he was not of a humour to have let it pass without making some reflection or other upon it.

8. Let me add yet more, that neither could those see the contradiction here pretended, who, in our present times, would have been as forward as any to have made use of it to the disadvantage of this epistle, had they had but the least grounds so to do. I shall instance only in two:—the first the late learned divine of Leyden, Monsieur le Moyne; who, though he judged the passage relating to St Ignatius's epistles which was wanting in his manuscript to be abrupt, and would from thence argue against the authority of it, yet has he made no reflection on the words immediately following, in which those others will have the contradiction to lie.

9. The other that I shall mention, in opposition to this pretence, is a yet later writer, Ernestus Tentzelius; who, though no great friend to this epistle, which he supposes to have been corrupted, no less than those of Ignatius were in the ancient editions of them, yet utterly refuses to comply with this objection, as not apprehending that there was the least ground for it.

10. But, to return from this digression, in answer to the exceptions of two of the most learned adversaries of this epistle against the credit of it, though, as I have now shown, St Polycarp wrote not to the Philippians till after the death of St Ignatius, and consequently this epistle, in order of time, ought to have been placed after those which the other wrote immediately before it,—yet was it fit to give this the precedency in the following collection, both as containing a most proper introduction to the epistles of Ignatius, and as having, in all probability, been first sent, in the same order, by St Polycarp to the Philippians.

11. For thus we find that holy man speaking to them in the close of his letter: "The epistles of Ignatius, which he wrote unto us, together with what others of his have come to our hands, we have sent unto you according to your order; which

are subjoined to this epistle." So both Eusebius transcribed it out of the original Greek, and so we find it in our ancient Latin version, which is all that remains of that part of this epistle. From whence our learned Archbishop Usher, with great reason, concludes that St Polycarp caused the copies of St Ignatius's epistles to be immediately added at the end of his own, and sent them to the Philippians together with it.

12. And this, perhaps, may have been one great means of preserving this epistle of St Polycarp from the fate that has attended all the rest of his writings. For, being wont to be transcribed together with those of Ignatius, and commonly placed at the front of them, they mutually helped to secure one another: whilst the rest of his writings, for want of being thus collected together, have for a long time been so utterly lost to the world that neither Photius, nor St Hierome, nor Eusebius, seem to have had any particular catalogue of them. Nor hath Irenæus, the disciple of St Polycarp, given us such a one.

13. Indeed, for what concerns the last of these, I mean Irenæus, he tells us that this great man did write several epistles, not only to the neighbouring churches, to confirm them in the faith, but even to particular persons, for their instruction and admonition. But what they were, or to whom they were sent, neither does he say, nor does Eusebius, where he speaks of the writings of St Polycarp, mention any more than that epistle to the Philippians of which we are now discoursing. And though a few later authors pretend to give us the very titles of some other of his works, yet have we reason to doubt, from this silence of those who lived the nearest to his time, that their authority is but small; nor can we say that even the pieces which they name are anywhere to be found at this day.

14. Nor shall I except there those fragments lately published by Fevardentius, out of Victor Capuanus, and reprinted by Bishop Usher, in his appendix to Ignatius; in which, as there are some things which neither Father Halloix nor our learned Usher could approve of as written by St Polycarp, so the distance of him who was the first collector of them from the time of that blessed martyr, and the manifest proofs he has, on other occasions, given of his little care and judgment in distinguishing the works of the ancient fathers who lived

any long time before him (not to say anything of the passages themselves ascribed to St Polycarp, but little agreeable to the apostolic age); all these considerations have justly restrained learned men from giving any great credit to those fragments, or from receiving them as belonging in any wise to so ancient an author.

15. But whatever becomes of these fragments, certain it is that the epistle which I have here subjoined is the genuine work of this holy man, and worthy of that great character which antiquity has given of it. Even Monsieur Daillé himself confesses that, excepting only the close of it, against which it was necessary for him to declare himself, there is nothing in it that either ought to offend any, or that may be thought unworthy of Polycarp. But Le Moyne goes yet farther: he tells us that he does not see how anyone can entertain the least suspicion against it—that there is not, perhaps, any work extant that has more certain evidences of its being genuine than this—in short that, if it shall be lawful to doubt of this, there will be no monument of antiquity left which we may not as well call in question, and reject as spurious.

16. Indeed, so general is the reception which learned men, on all sides, have given to this epistle, that I might well omit any farther discourse in confirmation of the credit and authority of it; but yet, seeing there have been two things started by some of late, if not utterly to destroy, yet at least to lessen the reputation of this piece, I will consider, in short, what may fairly be replied to both their exceptions.

17. Now the first is that of Tentzelius, in his exercitation upon this epistle; who, though he allows it to be undoubtedly genuine, yet supposes it to have been corrupted by the same hand that we confess did corrupt the epistles of Ignatius, about six hundred years after Christ. But to this I reply, first, that it is allowed that there is nothing in this epistle that may give any just grounds for the suspicion of any such fraud as this, it being acknowledged, even by Monsieur Daillé himself (one of the greatest adversaries of it) to be an epistle in all respects worthy of St Polycarp, excepting only in the close of it, which I shall more particularly consider by and by. So that either we have this epistle pure and uncorrupted as it was first written, or at least we have it so little prejudiced by any alterations that may have been made in it, that there is

nothing in the epistle, as it now is, dangerous, in point either of faith or manners, or that might not have well enough been written by St Polycarp. But this was not the case with the epistles of St Ignatius, which not only laboured under many impertinences unbecoming the character of that great man, but were fraught with many things that were altogether fabulous; nay, if we may credit Archbishop Usher, had some passages in them that tended to corrupt the very faith in Christ, in one of the most considerable points of it.

18. But, secondly, that the epistles of St Ignatius had been corrupted was evident from disagreement of the copies which we usually had of them from the quotations of the ancient fathers of the first five centuries out of them. Now this was a most unquestionable demonstration of their having been changed from what they were in those first ages in which those fathers lived; and accordingly proved to be so, when the old Latin version of Bishop Usher first, and then the Florentine Greek edition of the learned Isaac Vossius, came to be compared with those editions that had before been extant of them. But neither does this exception appear against the present epistle, which agrees with what is quoted both by Eusebius and others out of it; and thereby clearly shows our present copy to be sincere and uncorrupted.

19. Seeing then there is nothing but a mere conjecture for the depravation of this epistle, and such just reason to conclude that there is no good foundation for it (to be sure none that may compare with the arguments we have against it), I think we may conclude that for anything yet appearing to the contrary, we not only have the genuine epistle of St Polycarp, but that epistle free from any designed corruptions or depravations of it.

20. Nor is there any more, I do not say that there is much less, weight, in the other supposal of Monsieur Daillé, continued and abetted by his learned defender, Monsieur Larroque, though without any other or greater proof than what had been before fully answered by our most learned and judicious Bishop Pearson; namely, that this epistle originally ended at the doxology which we meet with in chapter the twelfth, and that what follows concerning the epistles of St Ignatius has been added to it by some later hand. But now what proof do they offer of this? what authority have they to

support such a supposition? This they pretend not to. All they have to say is that the doxology which we find there seems to imply that the epistle originally went no farther, and that in what follows there is a flat contradiction to what went before; the close of the epistle speaking of Ignatius as if he were still alive, whom the true Polycarp had before set forth to the Philippians as having "suffered," and "been gone to the place that was prepared for him."

21. As for what concerns the latter of these suggestions, I have already shown how vain and groundless it is. Nor can we reasonably suppose that any one who designed to serve a turn, by corrupting such an epistle as this, would have been either so negligent as not once to read over the piece he was about to make so considerable an addition to, or, having read it, would have been so foolish as to have, without any need, subjoined a request to the Philippians, directly contrary to what the true Polycarp had told them before, and which, by consequence, would be sure to discover the fraud and frustrate the design of it.

22. So little appearance of reason is there in this suggestion, which yet these learned men insist upon as their main argument against the latter part of this epistle. As for the other objection which they bring against it, viz. that St Polycarp must have concluded at the twelfth chapter, because of the vow which he there makes for those to whom he wrote; I reply, first, that this is at the best but a very uncertain guess; seeing it is notorious, to all that have ever read the epistles, either of the apostles or those that followed after, that nothing is more common than to meet with such kind of conclusions, not only in the end, but in the beginning[1] and middle;[2] in short, in all the parts of their epistles. To look no farther than the epistle with which we have begun this collection, of St Clement to the Corinthians, how many of these sorts of stops may we find in the progress of it? I am sure there are not less than seven or eight of them. But I suppose he would be thought very ridiculous who should therefore reject all that followed the first of these as none of St Clement's, but pieced on to the end of his epistle by some other hand, merely because the doxology seemed to imply his having concluded there.

[1] See 1 Tim. i. 17. [2] Ephes. iii. 20; Rom. xv. 33.

23. But to lay aside conjectures, and proceed to that which will put a final end to this difficulty, I observe, secondly, that this passage, which these men deny to be St Polycarp's, and suppose to have been added to it by some later hand, is expressly quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, as a part of this epistle. If therefore it be the addition of some other hand, it is evident it was made to it before Eusebius's time, that is to say, within two hundred years after the time of St Polycarp's writing of it; and whether this be probable we will now more particularly inquire.

24. For the better clearing of which, I must observe that this epistle of St Polycarp, like that of St Clement foregoing, was for several hundreds of years wont to be publicly read in the churches of Asia: so St Jerome informs us; or, as his interpreter Sophronius renders him, in the synod or convention of Asia; by which a learned man supposes we are to understand some common meetings of the Christians in those parts, answerable to the like assemblies of the Gentiles there; and that in these this epistle was wont to be read to them.

25. Hence Irenæus speaks of it as an epistle that was in everybody's hand, and obvious to be read by any, for the benefit of their faith and manners; which being so, it can hardly be supposed but that so inquisitive a searcher into antiquity as Eusebius was must needs have been very well acquainted with it, and doubtless have had a true and genuine copy of it. Seeing then he produces this passage as a part of this epistle, which was generally received as authentic in his days; and that the epistle itself, being spread into all hands, and publicly read in the eastern churches, immediately after the death of its great author, could not have been corrupted or altered but the cheat must needs have been discovered (of which yet we have not the least intimation in all antiquity); I think it cannot be doubted but that this, as well as the rest of that epistle, was written by St Polycarp himself, and not added to this epistle by some later hand, as is suggested, not only without all ground, but against such plain and unanswerable evidence to the contrary.

26. Having said thus much in vindication of this epistle, and to clear it from those prejudices that have of late been raised against it, it remains only for me to observe that, though the following translation was truly made from the

Greek and Latin copies of it set out by Bishop Usher first, and since reprinted by Cotelerius in his collection of the apostolical fathers, yet this is not the first time that this epistle has appeared in our language. For our most diligent and learned countryman, Dr Cave, having a just respect to the worth of a piece so highly applauded among the ancients, and so well deserving the esteem of all good men, thought it would be no unuseful digression to present to his reader so venerable a monument of the primitive church, and therefore subjoined it entirely to his account of the life of St Polycarp, in a most accurate English translation of it.

27. It would, no doubt, have been more to the reader's satisfaction to have met with that translation of this epistle here, than to find another, which he may have just reason to suppose can never equal that which was finished by so great a hand. And indeed I could have been glad to have rendered the following collection more considerable, by the reputation of a translation made by so eminent an author. But however, as it now is, I hope it may not be unacceptable to the pious peruser of it, who, whatever other defects he may find in it, may yet, I am pretty confident, depend upon the exactness of the translation; seeing, I perceive, by an after collation of it, that it does not differ, in any thing that is material, from that of the judicious and worthy Dr Cave.

ST POLYCARP'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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II. As to Matters of Faith.

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Of our Saviour Christ. Ib.
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And more particularly yet, from the miscarriage of Valens, who had been a presbyter among them, he exhorts them,

4. To beware of covetousness. XI.
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THE EPISTLE OF ST POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

POLYCARP, and the Presbyters that are with him, to the Church of God which is at Philippi: mercy unto you, and peace, from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, be multiplied.

I. I rejoice greatly with you, in our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye received the images of a true love, and accompanied as it behoved you those who are in bonds, becoming saints, which are the crowns of such as are truly chosen by God and our Lord; as also that the root of the faith, which was preached from ancient times, remains firm in you to this day, and brings forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered Himself to be brought even to the death for our sins. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:"[1] "whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;"[2] into which many desire to enter, knowing that "by grace ye are saved,"[3] not by works, but by the will of God, through Jesus Christ.

II. Wherefore, giving up the loins of your mind,[4] serve the Lord with fear, and in truth;[5] laying aside all empty and vain speech, and the error of many; "believing in Him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and hath given Him glory"[6] and a throne at His right hand; to whom all things are made subject, "both that are in heaven, and that are in earth;"[7] whom every living creature shall worship; who shall

[1] Acts ii. 24.
[2] 1 Pet. i. 8.
[3] Eph. ii. 8.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 13.
[5] Psal. ii. 11.
[6] 1 Pet. i. 21.
[7] Phil. ii. 10.

come to be the judge of the quick and dead; whose blood God shall require of them that believe not in Him. But He that raised Christ up from the dead shall also raise up us in like manner, if we do His will, and walk according to His commandments, and love those things which He loved; abstaining from all unrighteousness, "inordinate[1] affection, and love of money, from evil speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing," or striking for striking, or cursing for cursing; but remembering what the Lord has taught us, saying, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Be ye merciful, and ye shall obtain mercy: "for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."[2] And again, "Blessed are the poor, and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of God."[3]

III. These things, my brethren, I took not the liberty of myself to write unto you concerning righteousness, but you yourselves before encouraged me to it; for neither can I, nor any other such as I am, come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned Paul, who, being himself in person with those who then lived, did with all exactness and soundness teach the word of truth, and, being gone from you, wrote an epistle to you; into which if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith that has been delivered unto you, which is the mother of us all; being followed with hope, and led on by a general love, both towards God, and towards Christ, and towards our neighbour. For, if any man has these things, he has fulfilled the law of righteousness; for he that has charity is far from all sin.

IV. But "the love of money is the root of all evil." Knowing therefore that, as "we brought nothing into this world, so neither may we carry any thing out;"[4] let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness, and teach ourselves first to walk according to the commandments of the Lord, and then our wives to walk likewise according to the faith that is given to them in charity and in purity, loving their own husbands with all sincerity, and all others alike with all temperance; and to bring up their children in the instruction and fear of

[1] Eph. iv. 19; Coloss. iii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[2] Matt. vii. 1; Luke vi. 37, 38. [3] Matt. v. 3, 10; Luke vi. 20.
[4] 1 Tim. vi. 7.

the Lord. The widows likewise teach that they be sober as to what concerns the faith of the Lord, praying always for all men; being far from all detraction, evil-speaking, false witness, from covetousness, and from all evil; knowing that they are the altars of God, who sees all blemishes, and from whom nothing is hid; who searches out the very reasonings, and thoughts, and secrets of our hearts.

V. Knowing therefore that God is not mocked, we ought to walk worthy both of His command, and of His glory. Also the deacons must be blameless before Him, as the ministers of God in Christ, and not of men; not false accusers, nor double-tongued; not lovers of money, but moderate in all things; compassionate, careful; walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all; whom if we please in this present world, we shall also be made partakers of that which is to come, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us from the dead, and that, if we shall walk worthy of Him, we shall also reign together with Him, if we believe. In like manner the younger men must be unblamable in all things; above all taking care of their purity, and to restrain themselves from all evil. For it is good to be cut off from the lusts that are in the world; because every such "lust warreth against the spirit,"[1] and "neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God,"[2] nor they who do such things as are foolish and unreasonable. Wherefore ye must needs abstain from all these things, being subject to the priests and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins admonish to walk in a spotless and pure conscience.

VI. And let the elders be compassionate and merciful towards all; turning[3] them from their errors; seeking out those that are weak; not forgetting the widows, the fatherless, and the poor; but always "providing what is good both in the sight of God and man;"[4] abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgment; and especially being free from all covetousness: not easy to believe any thing against any; not severe in judgment, knowing that we are all debtors in point of sin. If therefore we pray to the Lord that He would forgive us, we ought also to forgive others, for we are all in the sight of our Lord and God, and "must all stand

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 11. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [3] Ezek. xxxiv. 4. [4] Rom. xii. 17.

before the judgment seat of Christ,"[1] and shall every one give an account of himself. Let us therefore serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, as both Himself hath commanded and as the apostles who have preached the gospel unto us, and the prophets who have foretold the coming of our Lord, have taught us; being zealous of what is good; abstaining from all offence and from false brethren, and from those who bear the name of Christ in hypocrisy, who deceive vain men.

VII. For "whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is antichrist;"[2] and whoever does not confess His suffering upon the cross is from the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there shall neither be any resurrection nor judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, leaving the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word that was delivered to us from the beginning; "watching unto prayer,"[3] and persevering in fasting; with supplication beseeching the all-seeing God "not to lead us into temptation,"[4] as the Lord hath said, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak."[5]

VIII. Let us, therefore, without ceasing, hold stedfastly to Him who is our hope, and the earnest of our righteousness, even Jesus Christ, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,"[6] but suffered all for us, that we might live through[7] Him. Let us, therefore, imitate His patience, and, if we suffer for His name, let us glorify Him; for this example He has given us by Himself, and so have we believed.

IX. Wherefore I exhort all of you that ye obey the word of righteousness, and exercise all patience, which ye have seen set forth before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zozimus, and Rufus, but in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. Being confident of this, that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and are gone to the place that was due to them from the Lord, with whom also they suffered; for they loved not this present world, but Him who died, and was raised again by God for us.

[1] Matt. xii. 36; Rom. iv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.
[2] 1 John iv. 3.
[3] 1 Pet. iv. 7.
[4] Matt. vi. 13.
[5] Matt. xxvi. 41.
[6] 1 Pet. ii. 22, 24.
[7] 1 Pet. iii. 14, &c.

X. Stand therefore in these things, and follow the example of the Lord; being firm and immutable in the faith, lovers of the brotherhood, lovers of one another; companions together in the truth, being kind and gentle towards each other, despising none. When it is in your power to do good, defer it not; for "charity delivereth from death."[1] "Be all of you subject one to another, having[2] your conversation honest among the Gentiles;" that, by your good works, both ye yourselves may receive praise, and the Lord may not "be blasphemed through you."[3] But woe be to him by whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed. Therefore teach all men sobriety, in which do ye also exercise yourselves.

XI. I am greatly afflicted for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, that he should so little understand the place that was given to him in the church. Wherefore I admonish you that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste, and true of speech. "Keep yourselves from all evil."[4] For he that in these things cannot govern himself, how shall he be able to prescribe them to another? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be polluted with idolatry, and be judged as if he were a Gentile. But who of you are ignorant of the judgment of God? "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world,"[5] as Paul teaches? But I have neither perceived nor heard anything of this kind in you among whom the blessed Paul laboured,[6] and who are named in the beginning of this epistle: for he glories of you in all the churches, who then only knew God; for we did not then know him. Wherefore, my brethren, I am exceedingly sorry both for him and for his wife, to whom God grant a true repentance. And be ye also moderate upon this occasion, and look not upon such as enemies; but call them back as suffering and erring members, that ye may save your whole body; for by so doing ye shall edify your ownselves.

XII. For I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you: but at present it is not granted unto me to practise that which is written,[7] "Be angry and sin not;" and again, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Blessed is he that believeth and remem-

[1] Tobit xii. 9. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 12. [3] Rom. ii. 24; Titus ii. 5.
[4] 1 Thess. v. 22; Eph. v. 5; Coloss. ii. 5. [5] 1 Cor. vi. 2.
[6] Phil. i. [7] Psal. iv. 5; Eph. iv. 26.

bereth these things, which also I trust you do. Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He Himself, who is our everlasting high priest, the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and in truth, and in all meekness and lenity, in patience and long-suffering, in forbearance and chastity; and grant unto you a lot and portion among His saints, and us with you, and to all that are under the heavens who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who "raised Him from the dead."[1] Pray for all the saints; pray also for "kings[2] and all that are in authority," and for those who persecute you and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest in all, and that ye may be perfect in Christ.

XIII. Ye wrote to me, both ye and also Ignatius, that if any one went from hence into Syria he should bring your letters with him, which also I will take care of as soon as I shall have a convenient opportunity, either by myself or him whom I shall send upon your account. The epistles of Ignatius, which he wrote unto us, together with what others of his have come to our hands, we have sent to you according to your order, which are subjoined to this epistle, by which ye may be greatly profited; for they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the Lord Jesus.

XIV. What you know certainly of Ignatius, and those that are with him, signify unto us.

These things have I written unto you by Crescens, whom by this present epistle I have recommended to you, and do now again commend; for he has had his conversation without blame among us, and I suppose also with you. Ye will also have regard unto his sister when she shall come unto you. Be ye safe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in favour with all yours. Amen.

[1] Gal. i. 1. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

CONCERNING THE

MARTYRDOM OF ST POLYCARP.

Preliminary Discourse of the Martyrdom of St Polycarp.

By Archbishop Wake.

THAT THERE WERE HERTOFORE SEVERAL CALLED BY THE NAME OF POLYCARP—BOTH THE COUNTRY AND PARENTAGE OF ST POLYCARP UNCERTAIN—WHAT HE WAS BEFORE HIS CONVERSION, AND BY WHOM CONVERTED—HE IS MADE BISHOP OF SMYRNA BY THE APOSTLES—HOW HE BEHAVED HIMSELF IN THAT OFFICE—THE GREAT VENERATION WHICH THE CHRISTIANS HAD FOR HIM—OF HIS JOURNEY TO ROME, AND WHAT HE DID THERE—THE TESTIMONY OF ST JOHN CONCERNING HIM (REV. II. 8)—OF THE TIME OF ST POLYCARP'S MARTYRDOM—WHAT PERSECUTIONS THE CHURCH THEN LABOURED UNDER—OF THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA CONCERNING HIS SUFFERINGS, AND THE VALUE WHICH THE ANCIENTS PUT UPON IT—OF THE MIRACLE THAT IS SAID TO HAVE HAPPENED AT HIS DEATH—WHAT HIS AGE WAS WHEN HE SUFFERED—WHAT THE DAY OF HIS SUFFERING—IN WHAT PLACE HE WAS PUT TO DEATH—OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESENT EPISTLE; AND ITS TRANSLATION INTO OUR OWN LANGUAGE.

1. THE epistle of the church of Smyrna (the next piece that follows in the present collection), however it makes mention of some others that suffered at the same time with St Polycarp, for the faith of Christ; yet, insisting chiefly upon the particulars of his passion, and being designed by that

church to communicate to all the world the glorious end of their beloved bishop, and most worthy and constant martyr of Christ, I shall observe the same method in treating of this, that I did in discoursing of the acts of St Ignatius before; and speak somewhat of the life of St Polycarp first, before I come to consider the account that is here given us of his death.

2. That there were several of the name of Polycarp heretofore, and who must therefore carefully be distinguished from him of whom we are now to discourse, has been evidently shown by the late learned editor of his epistle. As for our Polycarp, the disciple of St John, and the great subject of the present martyrology, we have little account either what was his country, or who his parents. In general, we are told that he was born somewhere in the East; as Le Moyne thinks, not far from Antioch; and perhaps from Smyrna itself, says our learned Dr Cave. Being sold in his childhood, he was bought by a certain noble matron whose name was Callisto, and bred up by her, and at her death made heir to all her estate; which though very considerable, he soon spent in works of charity and mercy.

3. His Christianity he received in his younger years, from Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna: by whom being made deacon and catechist of that church, and discharging those offices with great approbation, he was, upon the death of Bucolus, made Bishop of Smyrna, by the apostles; and particularly by St John, whose disciple, together with Ignatius, he had before been.

4. How considerable a reputation he gained by his wise administration of this great office, we may in some measure conclude from that character which his very enemies gave of him at his death: when crying out that he should be thrown to the lions, they laid this to him as his crime, but which was indeed his chiefest honour. "This," say they, "is the doctor of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods." And when he was burnt they persuaded the governor not to suffer his friends to carry away any of his remains, "Lest," say they, "the Christians, forsaking Him that was crucified, should begin to worship Polycarp."

5. Nor was it any small testimony of the respect which was paid to him, that (as we are told in this epistle) the Christians

would not suffer him to pull off his own clothes, but strove who should be the most forward to do him service; thinking themselves happy if they could but come to touch his flesh. "For," says the epistle, "he was truly adorned with such a good conversation," as made all men pay a more than ordinary respect to him.

6. Hence St Hierome calls him the prince of all Asia; Sophronius the ἀρχηγὸς, or chief ruler, perhaps, says a learned man, in opposition to the Asiarchæ of the heathen spoken of in his epistle: signifying thereby, that as they were among the Gentiles the heads of their sacred rites, and presided in the common assemblies and spectacles of Asia, so was Polycarp among the Christians a kind of universal bishop or primate, the prince and head of the churches in those parts.

7. Nor was his care of the church confined within the bounds of the Lesser Asia, but extended even unto Rome itself: whither we are told he went upon the occasion of the Quarto-deciman controversy, then on foot between the eastern and western churches, and which he hoped to have put a stop to by his timely interposition with those of Rome. But though Anicetus and he could not agree upon that point, each alleging apostolical tradition to warrant them in their practice, yet that did not hinder but that he was received with all possible respect there, and officiated in their churches in presence of the bishop, and communicated with him in the most sacred mysteries of religion.

8. While he was at Rome, he remitted nothing of his concern for the interests of the church, but employed his time partly in confirming those who were sound in the faith, but especially in drawing over those who were not, from their errors. In which work how successful he was, his own scholar Irenæus particularly recounts to us.

9. What he did after his return, and how he discharged his pastoral office to the time of his martyrdom, we have little further account; nor shall I trouble myself with the stories which Pionius, without any good grounds, has recorded of the life of this holy man. But that he still continued with all diligence to watch over the flock of Christ, we have all the reason in the world to believe; and that not only from what has been already observed, but from one particular more which ought not to be omitted; namely, that when Ignatius

was hurried away from his church of Antioch to his martyrdom, he knew none so proper to commend the care of it to as to this excellent man; or to supply by his own letters, what the other had not time to write, to all the other churches round about.

10. But I shall close up this part of the life of this holy saint with the testimony which St John has given to him (Rev. ii. 8), and which, as it affords us a sufficient evidence of the excellency of his life, so does it open the way to what we are next to consider, viz. his death and passion. "Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"

11. And this brings me to that which I am chiefly to insist upon, namely, the death of this blessed martyr; the subject of that epistle which is subjoined from the church of Smyrna concerning it. And here I shall, in the first place, take for granted what our learned Bishop Pearson seems to have proved beyond contradiction, that St Polycarp suffered, not, as is commonly supposed, about the year of Christ 167, or as Bishop Usher has stated it, yet later, 169, much less as Petit, still later, 175; but under the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in the year of our Lord 147.[1] Now that the Christians about that time, and especially those of Asia, lay under some severe persecutions, is evident from the Apology which Justin Martyr about this very time presented to the emperor, in order to a mitigation of them: which however Baronius, and after him Valesius, place two or three years later; yet hath their opinion no certain grounds; nor does anything hinder us from reducing that Apology to the same time with St Polycarp's martyrdom; nay, and some have carried it still higher, even to the beginning of that emperor's reign; as both Eusebius among the ancients, and his learned editor Scaliger, not to mention any others, of later times, have done.

[1 Bishop Lightfoot, in a thorough examination of the question, concludes for A.D. 155 or 156.]

12. What the effect of this Apology was we cannot certainly tell; but that the persecution was not presently put to an end, not only the Second Apology of the same father (however the critics differ about the same), but that which Eusebius tells us was afterwards presented to his successor, Marcus Aurelius, by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, plainly makes appear, in which he complains that "the Christians were still informed against by wicked men, greedy of what they had; and prosecuted, notwithstanding the several orders that his father had given, and the letters he had himself written to the contrary." It is true Eusebius tells us that the Emperor Antoninus Pius had set out an effectual edict in favour of the Christians, and that particularly addressed to the common council of Asia, not long before the time in which we suppose St Polycarp to have suffered. And this seems to leave it under some doubt how a persecution could have been again revived against the church within so short a time, and after such a vigorous edict of an emperor still living, to the contrary. But it is evident Eusebius must have mistook the emperor, and have set down that for the rescript of Antoninus Pius which was indeed set out by Marcus Aurelius immediately after his death; as both the inscription shows, and Valesius and others have evidently made it appear to be.

13. It was, then, in one of these topical persecutions so frequent in the Lesser Asia, that the storm, happening to fall in a particular manner upon the Church of Smyrna, carried off this holy martyr among the rest. What the particular circumstances of his passion were it would be impertinent for me to relate in this place, seeing they are so fully and exactly described in the epistle of which we are now discoursing, a piece so excellently composed, that Eusebius thought it worthy to be almost entirely transcribed into his Ecclesiastical History; and of which a very great man of the last age professed, "That he knew not any thing in all ecclesiastical antiquity, that was more wont to affect his mind; insomuch that he seemed to be no longer himself when he read it, and believed that no good Christian could be satisfied with reading often enough this, and the like accounts of the sufferings of those blessed martyrs who in the primitive times laid down their lives for the faith."

14. Nor did the ancients put any less value upon this piece,

which, as Gregory of Tours tells us, was even to his time read publicly in the Gallican churches, and no doubt made a part of that annual remembrance which the churches of Asia kept of his martyrdom.

15. But though I think it needless to mention here any thing of what the following epistle relates concerning the passion of this holy man, yet one circumstance there is, which both Eusebius and Ruffinus having omitted, is also passed by in the following translation, though found in the Acts, as set out from the Barroccian manuscript by Archbishop Usher: and that is this, that the soldier or officer having struck his lance into the side of the saint, there came forth a pigeon, together with a great quantity of blood, as is expressed in the following epistle. Now, though there may seem to have been something of a foundation for such a miracle in the raillery of Lucian, upon the death of Peregrinus the philosopher, who burnt himself about the same time that St Polycarp suffered, and from whose funeral pile he makes a vulture to ascend, in opposition, it may be, to St Polycarp's pigeon; if indeed he designed (as a learned man has conjectured) under the story of that philosopher, to ridicule the life and sufferings of Polycarp; yet, I confess I am so little a friend to such kind of miracles, that I thought it better, with Eusebius, to omit that circumstance, than to mention it from Bishop Usher's manuscript. And indeed, besides the strangeness of such an adventure, I cannot think, had any such thing truly happened at his death, that not only Eusebius should have been ignorant of it, but that neither St Hierome, nor Ruffinus, nor the Menæa of the Greek Church, should have made the least mention of it. Either, therefore, there must have been some interpolation in the manuscript set forth by that learned man; or, because that does not appear, perhaps it may be better accounted for by the mistake of a single letter in the original; which will bring it to no more than what Eusebius has in effect said, that "there came out of his left side a great quantity of blood."

16. As for what concerns the time of his martyrdom, I have before shown the different computations which learned men have made of it. Nor are they less at variance about the age of this holy martyr when he suffered, than about the year of his suffering: for though St Polycarp expressly told

the proconsul, as we read in the following epistle, that he had "served Christ eighty and six years;" yet some interpret this of the number of years since his conversion; others of those of his whole life. But however this much is evident, that, whichsoever of the two be in the right, they will either of them make good what Irenæus has told us of him, that "he was very old when he died;" from which nothing can be concluded either for the former of these opinions, or against the latter.

17. But the following acts of his martyrdom go yet farther: they tell us that he not only suffered at "so great an age;" but upon the "great sabbath, the second day of the month Xanthicus, before the seventh calend of March, about two o'clock." What is meant by this "great sabbath" is another point much debated, but never like to be agreed among learned men; whose opinions are examined at large by Bishop Usher, Valesius, Le Moyne, Bishop Pearson, and others upon this occasion. But if we were right before, in assigning the year of his suffering, as I think we were, then we must conclude the great sabbath to have been the same here that is usually called by that name among ecclesiastical writers, namely, the *Saturday in the holy week;* to which all the other characters here assigned are exactly correspondent. And then, according to this computation, St Polycarp will have suffered in the year of Christ 147, being March the 26th, the Saturday before Easter, about the eighth hour.

18. The place in which he suffered was a large amphitheatre, in which the common assemblies of Asia were wont to be kept: and, as we are told by those who have travelled into those parts, is in some measure still remaining, and shown as the place of St Polycarp's martyrdom. I say nothing to that which some have observed upon this occasion of the calamities which not long after fell upon the city of Smyrna, and which may seem to have been the effect of the Divine vengeance, punishing them for their cruelty towards this excellent man and the rest of his companions who suffered together with him; because this is without the bounds of my present design, which leads me only to consider what concerns the epistle of the Church of Smyrna, to which that which followed the death of Polycarp has no relation.

19. Having now passed through the chief parts of the following relation, and which seemed most to require our animadversion, it is time for me to observe concerning the epistle itself, which is here subjoined, that it is a piece of most unquestionable credit and antiquity. As for the main body of it, we find it preserved in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, who lived not above an age and a half after the writing of it. And even the manuscript itself, made use of by Bishop Usher, is so well attested that we need not any farther assurance of the truth of it. The sum of the account which we have given us of it is this, "that Caius, an acquaintance of St Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, transcribed it from the copy of that father; and Socrates the Corinthian from Caius; and from Socrates' copy was transcribed that manuscript which we still have of it."

20. Twice has this epistle been put into our own language, as far as the History of Eusebius has given occasion for the translation of it. What those editions are I cannot tell, having never perused either of them. But I suppose it is now for the first time joined in an entire piece together, and so communicated to the English reader. In my translation of it I have strictly followed the edition of our most reverend primate, from which Cotelerius's is but a copy: nor have I, that I know of, departed in the least circumstance from it, except in that one for which I have before accounted. So that I may venture to say I have here truly set forth the epistle of the church of Smyrna, as near as our language would serve to express the sense, if not to come up to the beauty and vigour of the original.

Circular Epistle of the Church of Smyrna

CONCERNING THE

Martyrdom of St Polycarp.

THE church of God which is at Smyrna, to the church of God which is at Philadelphia, and to all the other assemblies of the holy catholic church in every place; mercy, peace, and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

I. We have written to you, brethren, both of what concerns the other martyrs, but especially Polycarp the blessed, who by his sufferings put an end to the persecution; setting, as it were, his seal to it. For almost all things that went before were done that the Lord might show us, from above, a martyrdom truly such as became the gospel. For he expected to be delivered up, even as the Lord also did, that we should become the followers of his example; considering not only what is profitable for ourselves, but also for our neighbours' advantage. For it is the part of a true and perfect charity to desire not only that a man's self should be saved, but also all the brethren.

II. The sufferings, then, of all the other martyrs, were blessed and generous; which they underwent according to the will of God. For so it becomes us, who are more religious than others, to ascribe the power and ordering of all things unto Him. And, indeed, who can choose but admire the greatness of their mind, and that admirable patience, and love

of their Master, which then appeared in them; who, when they were so flayed with whipping, that the frame and structure of their bodies were laid open to their very inward veins and arteries, nevertheless endured it? And when all that beheld them pitied and lamented them, yet they showed so great a generosity of mind, that not one of them let so much as a sigh or a groan escape them, plainly showing, that these holy martyrs of Christ, at the very same time that they were thus tormented, were absent from the body; or, rather, that the Lord stood by them, and conversed with them. Wherefore, being supported by the grace of Christ, they despised all the torments of the world; by the sufferings of an hour redeeming themselves from everlasting punishment. For this cause, even the fire of their cruel and barbarous executioners seemed cold to them; whilst they hoped thereby to escape that fire which is eternal, and shall never be extinguished; and beheld, with the eyes of faith, those good things which are reserved for them that endure to the end; "which neither ear has heard nor eye seen, nor have they entered into the heart of man."[1] But to them they were now revealed by the Lord; as being no longer men, but already become angels. In like manner, those who were condemned to the beasts, and kept a long time in prison, underwent many cruel torments; being forced to lie upon sharp spikes, laid under their bodies, and tormented with divers other sorts of punishments; that so, if it were possible, the tyrant, by the length of their sufferings, might have brought them to deny Christ.

III. For, indeed, the devil did invent many things against them; but, thanks be to God, he was not able to prevail over all; for the brave Germanicus strengthened those that feared by his patience, and fought gloriously with the beasts. For when the proconsul would have persuaded him, telling him that he should consider his age, and spare himself, he pulled the wild beast to him, and provoked him, being desirous the more quickly to be delivered from a wicked and unjust world. Upon this, the whole multitude, wondering at the courage of the holy and pious race of Christians, cried out, "Take away those wicked wretches; let Polycarp be looked out."

IV. Then one named Quintus, a Phrygian, being newly

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

come from thence, seeing the beasts, was afraid. This was he who forced himself and some others to present themselves, of their own accord, to the trial. Him, therefore, the proconsul persuaded, with many promises, to swear and sacrifice. For which cause, brethren, we do not commend those who offer themselves to persecution, seeing the gospel teaches no such thing.

V. But the most admirable Polycarp, when he first heard that he was called for, was not at all concerned at it, but resolved to tarry in the city. Nevertheless, he was at the last persuaded, at the desire of many, to go out of it. He departed, therefore, into a little village, not far distant from the city, and there tarried with a few about him; doing nothing, night nor day, but praying for all men, and for the churches which were in all the world, according to his usual custom. And as he was praying, he saw a vision three days before he was taken; and behold, the pillow under his head seemed to him on fire. Whereupon, turning to those that were with him, he said prophetically, that he should be burnt alive.

VI. Now when those who were to take him drew near, he departed into another village; and immediately they who sought him came thither. And when they found him not, they seized upon two young men that were there; one of which, being tormented, confessed. For it was impossible he should be concealed, forasmuch as they who betrayed him were his own domestics. So the officer who is also called *cleronomus*, (Herod by name,) hastened to bring him into the lists; that so Polycarp might receive his proper portion, being made partaker of Christ, and they that betrayed him undergo the punishment of Judas.

VII. The serjeants, therefore, and horsemen, taking the young lad along with them, departed about supper-time (being Friday) with their usual arms, as it were against a thief or a robber. And being come to the place where he was, about the close of the evening, they found him lying down in a little upper room; from whence he could easily have escaped into another place, but he would not, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." Wherefore, when he heard that they were come to the house, he went down and spake to them. And as they that were present wondered at his age and constancy, some of them began to say, "Was there need of all this care

to take such an old man?" Then presently he ordered that the same hour there should be somewhat got ready for them, that they might eat and drink their fill; desiring them withal that they would give him one hour's liberty the while, to pray without disturbance. And when they had permitted him, he stood praying, being full of the grace of God, so that he ceased not for two whole hours, to the admiration of all that heard him; insomuch that many of the soldiers began to repent that they were come out against so godly an old man.

VIII. As soon as he had done his prayer—in which he remembered all men, whether little or great, honourable or obscure, that had at any time been acquainted with him; and, with them, the whole catholic church, over all the world—the time being come that he was to depart, the guards set him upon an ass, and so brought him into the city, being the day of the great Sabbath. And Herod, the chief officer, with his father Nicetes, met him in a chariot. And having taken him up to them, and set him in the chariot, they began to persuade him, saying, "What harm is there in it, to say, Lord Cæsar, and sacrifice, (with the rest that is usual on such occasions) and so be safe?" But Polycarp, at first, answered them not: whereupon they continuing to urge him, he said, "I shall not do what you persuade me to." So being out of all hope of prevailing with him, they began first to rail at him; and then, with violence, threw him out of the chariot, insomuch that he hurt his thigh with the fall. But he, not turning back, went on readily with all diligence, as if he had received no harm at all, and so was brought to the lists, where there was so great a tumult, that nobody could be heard.

IX. As he was going into the lists, there came a voice from heaven to him—"Be strong, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man." Now no one saw who it was that spake to him; but for the voice, many of our brethren, who were present, heard it. And as he was brought in, there was a great disturbance when they heard how that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp: who, confessing that he was, he persuaded him to deny the faith, saying, "Reverence thy old age;" with many other things of the like nature, as their custom is: concluding thus, "Swear by Cæsar's fortune. Repent, and say, take away the

wicked." Then Polycarp, looking with a stern countenance upon the whole multitude of wicked Gentiles that was gathered together in the lists, and shaking his hand at them, looked up to heaven, and groaning, said, "Take away the wicked." But the proconsul insisting and saying, "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach Christ." Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and He has never done me the least wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

X. And when the proconsul nevertheless still insisted, saying, "Swear by the genius of Cæsar," he answered, "Seeing thou art so vainly urgent with me that I should swear, as thou callest it, by the genius of Cæsar, seeming as if thou didst not know what I am; hear me freely professing it to thee, that I am a Christian. But if thou farther desirest an account what Christianity is, appoint a day, and thou shalt hear it." The proconsul replied, "Persuade the people." Polycarp answered, "To thee have I offered to give a reason of my faith: for so are we taught to pay all due honour (such only excepted as would be hurtful to ourselves), to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. But for the people, I esteem them not worthy that I should give any account of my faith to them."

XI. The proconsul continued, and said unto him, "I have wild beasts ready: to those I will cast thee, except thou repent." He answered, "Call for them, then; for we Christians are fixed in our minds not to change from good to evil. But for me it will be good, to be changed from evil to good." The proconsul added, "Seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be devoured by fire, unless thou shalt repent." Polycarp answered, "Thou threatenest me with fire which burns for an hour, and so is extinguished; but knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment which is reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."

XII. Having said this, and many other things of the like nature, he was filled with confidence and joy, insomuch that his very countenance was full of grace; so that he did not only not let it fall with any confusion at what was spoken to him, but on the contrary, the proconsul was struck with astonishment, and sent his crier into the middle of the lists, to

proclaim three several times—"Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian." Which being done by the crier, the whole multitude, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews which dwelt at Smyrna, being full of fury, cried out with a loud voice, "This is the doctor of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods; he that has taught so many not to sacrifice, nor pay any worship to the gods." And saying this, they cried out, and desired Philip the asiarch, that he would let loose a lion against Polycarp. But Philip replied that it was not lawful for him to do so, because that kind of spectacle was already over. Then it pleased them to cry out with one consent that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For so it was necessary that the vision should be fulfilled which was made manifest unto him by his pillow, when, seeing it on fire as he was praying, he turned about, and said prophetically to the faithful that were with him, "I must be burnt alive."

XIII. This, therefore, was done with greater speed than it was spoke: the whole multitude instantly gathering together wood and faggots, out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to their custom, with all readiness assisting them in it. When the fuel was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his upper garments, and undoing his girdle, tried also to pull off his clothes underneath, which aforetime he was not wont to do; forasmuch as always every one of the Christians that was about him contended who should soonest touch his flesh. For he was truly adorned by his good conversation with all kind of piety, even before his martyrdom. This being done, they presently put about him such things as were necessary to prepare the fire. But when they would have also nailed him to the stake, he said, "Let me alone as I am: for He who has given me strength to endure the fire will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to stand without moving in the pile."

XIV. Wherefore they did not nail him, but only tied him to it. But he, having put his hands behind him—and being bound as a ram chosen out of a great flock for an offering, and prepared to be a burnt-sacrifice acceptable unto God—looked up to heaven, and said, "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy well-beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee; the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and especially of

the whole race of just men who live in Thy presence! I give Thee hearty thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day, and to this hour; that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup of Thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among which may I be accepted this day before Thee, as a fat and acceptable sacrifice; as Thou the true God, with whom is no falsehood, hast both before ordained, and manifested unto me, and also hast now fulfilled it. For this, and for all things else, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, by the eternal and heavenly high priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son; with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now, and to all succeeding ages." Amen.

XV. He had no sooner pronounced aloud *Amen*, and finished his prayer, but they who were appointed to be his executioners lighted the fire. And when the flame began to blaze to a very great height, behold a wonderful miracle appeared to us who had the happiness to see it, and who were reserved by heaven to report to others what had happened. For the flame, making a kind of arch, like the sail of a ship filled with the wind, encompassed, as in a circle, the body of the holy martyr, who stood in the midst of it, not as if his flesh were burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold or silver glowing in the furnace. Moreover, so sweet a smell came from it as if frankincense, or some rich spices, had been smoking there.

XVI. At length, when those wicked men saw that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded the executioner to go near to him, and stick his dagger in him; which being accordingly done, there came forth so great a quantity of blood, as even extinguished the fire, and raised an admiration in all the people, to consider what a difference there was between the infidels and the elect; one of which this great martyr, Polycarp, most certainly was, being in our times a truly apostolical and prophetical teacher, and bishop of the catholic church which is at Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been already fulfilled, or in its due time will be accomplished.

XVII. But when the emulous, and envious, and wicked adversary of the race of the just, saw the greatness of his

martyrdom, and considered how irreprehensible his conversation had been from the beginning, and how he was now crowned with the crown of immortality, having without all controversy received his reward, he took all possible care that not the least remainder of his body should be taken away by us, although many desired to do it, and to be made partakers of his holy flesh. And to that end, he suggested it to Nicetas, the father of Herod and brother of Alcé, to go to the governor, and hinder him from giving us his body to be buried. "Lest," says he, "forsaking Him that was crucified, they should begin to worship this Polycarp." And this he said at the suggestion and instance of the Jews, who also watched us, that we should not take him out of the fire; not considering that neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the whole world, "the righteous for the ungodly;"[1] nor worship any other besides Him. For Him indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore; but for the martyrs we worthily love them, as the disciples and followers of our Lord, and upon the account of their exceeding great affection towards their Master, and their King; of whom may we also be made companions and fellow-disciples.

XVIII. The centurion, therefore, seeing the contention of the Jews, put his body into the midst of the fire, and so consumed it. After which, we taking up his bones, more precious than the richest jewels, and tried above gold, deposited them where it was fitting: where, being gathered together as we have opportunity, with joy and gladness, the Lord shall grant unto us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have suffered, and for the exercise and preparation of those that may hereafter suffer.

XIX. Such was the passion of the blessed Polycarp, who though he was the twelfth of those who, together with those of Philadelphia, suffered martyrdom, is yet alone chiefly had in memory of all men; insomuch that he is spoken of by the very Gentiles themselves, in every place, as having been not only an eminent teacher, but also a glorious martyr; whose death all desire to imitate, as having been every way conformable to the gospel of Christ. For having by patience overcome the unjust governor, and so received the crown of

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

immortality, he now, together with the apostles, and all other righteous men who have gone before, with great triumph glorifies God, even the Father, and blesses our Lord, the governor both of our souls and bodies, and shepherd of the catholic church which is over all the earth.

XX. Whereas, therefore, ye desired that we would at large declare to you what was done, we have for the present given you a summary account of it by our brother Marcus. Having therefore yourselves read this epistle, you may do well to send it forward to the brethren that are farther off, that they also may glorify God, who makes such choice of His own servants, and is able to bring all of us, by His grace and help, to His eternal kingdom, through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ; to whom be glory, and honour, and power, and majesty, for ever and ever. Amen.—Salute all the saints; they that are with us salute you; and Evarestus, who wrote this epistle, with his whole house.

XXI. Now the suffering of the blessed Polycarp was the second day of the present month Xanthicus, viz., the seventh of the calends of March; being the great Sabbath, about the eighth hour. He was taken by Herod, Philip the Trallian being high-priest; Statius Quadratus, proconsul; but our Saviour Christ reigning for evermore. To Him be honour, glory, majesty, and an eternal throne, from generation to generation. Amen.

XXII. We wish you, brethren, all happiness, by living according to the rule of the gospel of Jesus Christ; with whom, glory be to God, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of His chosen saints; after whose example the blessed Polycarp suffered; at whose feet may we be found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

An Advertisement relating to the foregoing Epistle.

This Epistle was transcribed by Caius out of the copy of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who also lived and conversed with Irenæus. And I, Socrates, transcribed it at Corinth, out of the copy of the said Caius. Grace be with all.

After which I, Pionius, again wrote it from the copy before mentioned; having searched it out by the revelation of Polycarp, who directed me to it; as also I shall declare in what follows. Having gathered these things together, now almost corrupted through process of time, that Jesus Christ our Lord may also gather me together with His elect; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

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THE interesting treatise before us has only recently become known to the world. The MS. was found by Archbishop Bryennios (see Preface to St Clement's Epistle, Ancient and Modern Library, Vol. xx.) in a volume containing the writings of other Fathers, in 1873. At first the present work, Ἡ Διδαχὴ τῶν Δώδεκα ἀποστολῶν, did not arrest the attention of the finder, so completely occupied was he with his grand discovery of the hitherto missing portions of St Clement. But before long the importance of this new discovery became understood by him, and on his publication of it, it was eagerly studied by several masters in theological science. The genuineness of the document is universally admitted. It is cited by St Clement of Alexandria, by Eusebius, and by St Athanasius. Two editors of the Fathers had already come to the conclusion, that such a work there must have been underlying the Seventh Book of the Apostolical Constitution; and another, in 1882, had even undertaken to reconstruct the missing document, and had succeeded almost with the skill of Professor Owen in Palæontology, as the manuscript proved which the next year brought to light.

The treatise belongs, probably, to the second century, though Archdeacon Farrar and Prebendary Sadler, both first-class judges, are of opinion that it is of the first century. Of the author, as of any peculiarities of his opinions, we know absolutely nothing. There are a few Hebraisms in the Greek, and this may lead to the conclusion that he was a Hebrew Christian, but there is nothing to indicate that he

was a "Judaizer" or Ebionite. There is a good deal of similarity with the Epistle of St Barnabas, and also with the teaching of the Alexandrian school of divinity. In this document occurs the earliest mention that we have of the Wednesday and Friday fast. It is mentioned, a little later, by St Clement of Alexandria (Strom. vii.). The treatise gives us, perhaps, little information that had not been gathered from other writings of the primitive Church; yet it is full of interest from its vividness and freshness, and would seem to have been intended as a manual of simple practical teaching for men engaged in missionary work.

TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations.

CHAP. I. Two ways there are—one of life and one of death; but there is a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: first, thou shalt love the God who made thee; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself; and all things whatsoever thou wouldst not have befall thee, thou, too, do not to another. Now of these words the teaching is this: Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for them that persecute you; for what thanks *have ye* if ye love them that love you? Do not the nations also the same? But love ye them that hate you, and ye shall have no enemy. Abstain from the fleshly and worldly lusts. If anyone give thee a blow on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect; if anyone compel thee to go one mile, go with him two; if anyone take thy cloak, give him thy tunic also; if anyone take from thee what is thine, ask it not back, for indeed thou canst not. To everyone that asketh thee, give, and ask not back; for to all the Father desireth to have given of His own gracious gifts. Blessed is he that giveth according to the commandment, for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receiveth, for, if indeed one receiveth who hath need, he shall be guiltless; but he that hath no need shall give account, why he took, and for what purpose; and coming under confinement, shall be examined concerning what he did, and shall not go out thence until he pay the last

farthing. But it hath been also said concerning this *matter*, Let thine alms sweat in thy hands, until thou knowest to whom thou shouldst give.

CHAP. II. Now a second commandment of the teaching *is:* Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not corrupt boys, thou shalt not commit fornication, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not practise magic, thou shalt not use sorcery, thou shalt not slay a child by abortion, nor what is conceived shalt thou destroy. Thou shalt not lust after the things of thy neighbour, thou shalt not forswear thyself, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not revile, thou shalt not be revengeful, thou shalt not be double-minded nor double-tongued, for a snare of death is the double-tongue. Thy speech shall be false, not empty, but filled with doing. Thou shalt not be covetous, nor rapacious, nor a hypocrite, nor malicious, nor arrogant. Thou shalt not take evil counsel against thy neighbour. Thou shalt hate no man, but some thou shalt reprove, and for some thou shalt pray, and some thou shalt love above thy life.

CHAP. III. My child, flee from every evil thing, and from everything like it. Be not prone to anger, for anger leadeth to murder; nor jealous, nor contentious, nor passionate, for of all these, murders are begotten. My child, become not lustful, for lust leadeth to fornication; nor foul-mouthed, nor lofty-eyed, for of all these things adulteries are begotten. My child, become not an omen-watcher, since it leadeth into idolatry; nor an astrologer, nor a purifier, nor be willing to look upon these things, for of all these things idolatry is begotten. My child, become not a liar, since lying leads to theft; nor avaricious, nor vainglorious, for of all these things thefts are begotten. My child, become not a murmurer, since it leads to blasphemy; nor presumptuous, nor evil-minded, for of all these things blasphemies are begotten. But be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth. Become long-suffering, and pitiful, and guileless, and gentle and good, and tremble continually at the words which thou hast heard. Thou shalt not exalt thyself, nor permit over-boldness to thy soul. Thy soul shall not cleave to the high, but with the righteous and lowly thou shalt dwell. The things that befall thee accept as well-wrought, knowing that without God nothing occurs.

CHAP. IV. My child, him that speaks to thee the Word of

God remember night and day, and thou shalt honour him as the Lord; for where that which pertaineth to the Lord is spoken, there the Lord is. And thou shalt seek out daily the faces of the saints that thou mayst be refreshed by their words. Thou shalt not desire division, but shalt make peace between those who contend; thou shalt judge justly; thou shalt not respect persons in convicting for transgressions. Thou shalt not hesitate whether it shall be or not. Become not *one who* for taking stretches out the hands, but for giving draws them in; if thou hast *anything*, by thy hands thou shalt give a ransom for thy sins. Thou shalt not hesitate to give, nor when giving shalt thou murmur, for thou shalt know who is the good dispenser of the recompense. Thou shalt not turn away the needy, but shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say they are thine own; for if ye are partners in that which is imperishable, how much more in the perishable things? Thou shalt not take off thy hand from thy son and from thy daughter, but from youth thou shalt teach *them* the fear of God. Thou shalt not lay commands in thy bitterness upon thy slave or handmaid, who hope in the same God, lest they perchance shall not fear the God who is over *you* both; for he cometh not to call *men* according to the appearance, but to those whom the Spirit hath made ready. And ye, slaves, ye shall be subject to your lords, as to God's image, in modesty and fear. Thou shalt hate every hypocrisy, and whatever is not pleasing to the Lord. Thou shalt by no means forsake the Lord's commandments, but shalt guard what thou hast received, neither adding to it nor taking from it. In the church thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and shalt not come forward for thy prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

Chap. V. Now the way of death is this: first of all it is evil, and full of curse; murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisies, duplicity, craft, arrogance, vice, presumptuousness, greed, foul speech, jealousy, over-boldness, loftiness, pretence, persecutors of the good, hating truth, loving falsehood, knowing not the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to *that which is* good nor to righteous judgment, on the watch not for good but for evil; far from whom are meekness and patience, loving vanities, pursuing revenge, not pitying a poor *man*, not labour

ing for the distressed, not knowing Him that made them, murderers of children, destroyers of the image of God, turning away the needy, oppressing the afflicted, advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor, universal sinners; may ye be delivered, children, from all these.

CHAP. VI. See that no one lead thee astray from this way of the teaching, because apart from God does he teach thee. For if thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect; but if thou art not able, what thou art able, that do. And concerning food, what thou art able, bear; but of that offered to idols, beware exceedingly; for it is a worship of dead gods.

CHAP. VII. Now concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first uttered all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water. But if thou hast not running water; baptize in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, *then* in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water upon the head thrice, into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and whatever others can; but the baptized thou shalt command to fast for one or two days before.

CHAP. VIII. But let not your fastings be appointed in common with the hypocrites; for they fast on the second day of the week and on the fifth; but do ye fast during the fourth, and the preparation *day*. Nor pray ye like the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in His gospel, thus pray: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth; our daily bread give us to-day, and forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors, and bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Three times in the day pray ye thus.

CHAP. IX. Now concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks; first, concerning the cup: We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant; to Thee be the glory forever. And concerning the broken *bread:* We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and the knowledge which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Just as this broken *bread* was scattered over the hills

and having been gathered together became one, so let Thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, except those baptized into the Lord's name; for in regard to this the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

CHAP. X. Now after ye are filled, thus do ye give thanks: We thank Thee, holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge of faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for Thy name's sake; both food and drink Thou didst give to men for enjoyment, in order that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us Thou hast graciously given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy servant. Before all things, we thank Thee that Thou art powerful; to Thee be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from every evil, and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, *it*, the sanctified, into Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for it; for thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David! Whoever is holy, let him come; whoever is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen. But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they will.

CHAP. XI. Now whoever cometh and teacheth you all these things, before spoken, receive him; but if the teacher himself turn aside and teach another teaching so as to overthrow *this*, do not hear him; but *if he teach* so as to promote righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But in regard to the apostles and prophets, according to the ordinance of the gospel, so do ye. And every apostle who cometh to you, let him be received as the Lord; but he shall not remain *more than* one day; if, however, there be need, then the next *day;* but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. But when the apostle departeth, let him take nothing except bread enough till he lodge *again;* but if he ask money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet who speaketh in the spirit, ye shall not try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not

every one that speaketh in the spirit is a prophet, but *only* if he have the ways of the Lord. So from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known. And no prophet who orders a meal, in the spirit, eateth of it, unless indeed he is a false prophet; and every prophet who teacheth the truth, if he do not that which he teacheth, is a false prophet. But every prophet, proved, true, acting with a view to the mystery of the church on earth, but not teaching *others* to do all that he himself doeth, shall not be judged among you; for with God he hath his judgment; for so did the ancient prophets also. But whoever, in the spirit, says, Give me money, or something else, ye shall not hear him; but if for others in need, he bids *you* give, let no one judge him.

CHAP. XII. But let every one that cometh in the Lord's name be received, but afterward ye shall test and know him; for ye shall have understanding, right and left. If he who comes is a traveller, help him as much as ye can; but he shall not remain with you, unless for two or three days, if there be necessity. But if he will take up his abode among you, being an artisan, let him work and so eat; but if he have no trade, provide, according to your understanding, that no idler live with you as a Christian. But if he will not act according to this, he is one who makes gain out of Christ; beware of such.

CHAP. XIII. But every true prophet who will settle among you is worthy of his support. Likewise a true teacher, he also is worthy, like the workman, of his support. Every first-fruit, then, of the products of wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and of sheep, thou shalt take and give to the prophets; for they are your high priests. But if ye have no prophet, give *it* to the poor. If thou makest a baking of bread, take the first *of it* and give according to the commandment. In like manner when thou openest a jar of wine or oil, take the first *of it* and give to the prophets; and of money and clothing and every possession take the first, as seems right to thee, and give according to the commandment.

CHAP. XIV. But on the Lord's day do ye assemble and break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, in order that your sacrifice may be pure. But every one that hath controversy with his friend, let him not come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice

may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: At every place and time, bring Me a pure sacrifice; for a great King am I, saith the Lord, and My name is marvellous among the nations.

CHAP. XV. Now appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not avaricious, and upright and proved; for they, too, render you the service of the prophets and teachers. Despise them not, therefore; for they are the ones who are honoured of you, together with the prophets and teachers.

And reprove one another, not in anger, but in peace, as ye have *it* in the gospel; and to every one who erreth against another, let no one speak, nor let him hear *anything* from you, until he repent. But your prayers and your alms and all your deeds so do ye, as ye have *it* in the gospel of our Lord.

CHAP. XVI. Watch for your life's sake; let your lamp not go out, and your loins not be relaxed, but be ready; for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. But ye shall come together often, and seek the things which befit your souls; for the whole time of your faith *thus far* will not profit you, if ye do not become perfect in the last time. For in the last days the false prophets and the corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increaseth they shall hate one another, and shall persecute and shall deliver up, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be given into his hands, and he shall commit iniquities which have never yet been done since the beginning. Then all created men shall come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish. But they that endure in their faith shall be saved from this curse. And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first the sign of an opening in heaven, then the sign of the trumpet's sound, and thirdly, the resurrection of the dead; yet not of all, but as it hath been said, The Lord will come and all the saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.

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THE author of the following beautiful Epistle is unknown It has been guessed to be the work of Apollos, of Justin Martyr, of Clement of Rome. There are, however, internal reasons against all three. This only is clear, that the writer was a Catholic Christian, possessed not only of great eloquence, but of a humble and Scripture-loving spirit. He speaks of himself as having been a disciple of the Apostles, and probably lived before the destruction of Jerusalem, certainly not later than the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

The Epistle was first printed by H. Stephens, with a Latin translation, in 1592. The sole ancient manuscript of it, that from which Stephens printed, perished at Strassburg in the Franco-German War in 1870, but a transcript of it made by Stephens is preserved at Leyden.

EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.

1. SINCE I see, most excellent Diognetus, that thou art most zealous to be instructed in the worship of the Christians, and that thou art making very strict and careful inquiries concerning them,—what God believing in, and how serving Him, they all think lightly of the world itself, and despise death: and how they neither recognise those that are considered gods by the Greeks, nor hold the superstition of the Jews: and what tender love they have one towards another: and why this new race or practice entered into the present time of life and not earlier,—I gladly welcome this earnest zeal, and pray that God, who abundantly ministereth unto us both to speak and to hear, will grant to me, so to speak, as may be the more profitable for thee to hear, and to thee, so to hear, that he that speaks be not grieved.

2. Come now, cleanse thyself from all the thoughts which preoccupy thy mind, and put away the custom which deceives thee, and be as if from the beginning, a new man, and become a learner as of a new doctrine, as thou thyself hast agreed. See not only with the eyes but also with the understanding, what reality or what shape those have whom ye call and reckon as gods. Is not one a stone, like that which is trodden upon? another brass, no better than the vessels wrought for our use? another wood, even already become rotten? another silver, requiring a man to guard it that it be not stolen? another iron, destroyed by rust? another of clay, fitted for nothing better than what has been set apart for the most dishonoured service? Are not all these of perishable matter? Are they not wrought by iron and fire? And did not the stone-mason shape one, the copper-smith another, the silver-

smith another, the potter another? Was not each one before it was wrought in relief into the form of these gods, by the handicraft of these men, changed by each worker in various ways, and that even to the present time?

Might not those which are now vessels, which are of the same material, become, if they met with the same artificers, like unto such as these? Again, might not these things which are now worshipped by you, possibly be converted by men into vessels like unto the rest? Are they not blind? Are they not lifeless? Are they not senseless? Are they not motionless? Are they not all decaying? Are they not all perishing? These ye call gods, to these ye become slaves, these ye worship, and it is fulfilled . . . ye are made like unto them. For this reason ye hate Christians, because they do not believe in these gods. You who are now recognising and putting your fancy in these, do ye not much more despise them? Do ye not much rather scoff at and affront them? paying respect to gods of stone and clay left unguarded, and shutting up by night the gods of silver and gold, and setting a guard beside them by day that they be not stolen. And to these honours ye seem to add this: if they are sensible ye rather chastise them, but if they are without sense, ye dishonour them, offering them blood and the odour of burnt sacrifices.

Who among you will submit to these things? Who will suffer these things to happen to himself? Not one man will willingly endure this punishment, because he is possessed of understanding and reason; but a stone endures it, because it is senseless. Therefore it is understanding . . . that ye dishonour. Concerning, then, the fact that Christians have not been slaves to such gods, I might have many and other things to say; and if these things should not seem sufficient to anyone, I deem it useless to say anything further.

3. Next, concerning that they do not worship God in the same way as the Jews do, I think that thou art most of all longing to hear. The Jews, then, if they abstain from the aforenamed religious service to the gods, and consent to pay respect to one God of all and to esteem Him Lord, and offer to Him this service like they do to the aforenamed gods, are in error. For offering which things to the senseless and dumb the Greeks afford an example of folly, the same things the Jews in thinking to offer as to a god who is in need, would

rather esteem foolishness as reasonable, and not the worship of God.

For He who made the heaven and the earth and all things that are therein, and supplies to us all the things which we need, is Himself in want of none of those things, which He Himself vouchsafes to give to those who believe in Him. For they who think to fulfil their sacrifices to Him by means of blood and odour of burnt sacrifices, and whole burnt-offerings, and to honour Him with these rites, who needs that no one should think to offer Him anything, seem to me to differ in nothing from those who show the same honour to the deaf idols that cannot receive the honour.

4. But the scruples concerning meats, the observance of the Sabbath, and the vain boasting of circumcision, and their hypocrisy of fasting and of the new moon, things ridiculous and unworthy of discussion, I do (not) think that thou needest to learn of these from me. For how is it (not) right of those things which have been appointed by God for the use of me, to receive that which is good and to avoid that which is useless and harmful? And how is it not impious to slander God, as hindering from doing good on the Sabbath day? And how is it not a thing worthy of reproach to boast of enmity to the flesh as a testimony of election, as if for this reason men were loved exclusively by God. And that those who watch the stars and the moon should bring about an observance of months and days, and to closely regard the economy of God and the changes of the seasons. With regard to their first beginnings in times of rejoicing and in times of humiliation, who will consider this a proof of the fear of God and not much rather of foolishness? And so, then, why Christians rightly abstain from the common error and deceit, and from the meddlesome interference and boasting of the Jews, I think that thou hast sufficiently learned; but the mysteries of their own worship do not thou expect to be able to learn from man.

5. For Christians are not different from the remainder of mankind either in country, language, or customs. For neither do they dwell in separate states, nor do they use any special dialect, nor do they practise any unusual mode of living. Being men of busy habits there is not found in them any special faculty of inventiveness or reflection; neither do they excel in human learning as do some.

Dwelling in cities, Greek or barbarian, according as the lot of each is cast, and following the national customs in dress, food, and the other modes of living, yet they show the constitution of their state wonderful and admittedly marvellous. They live in their own country, but as strangers. They share in all things as citizens, but endure all things as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land. They marry as all men; they beget children, but they do not destroy their children. They sit at a common table, but (not) unclean. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They dwell upon earth, but are citizens in heaven. They obey the ordained laws, but in their manner of life they live above the laws. They love all men and are persecuted by all men; they are unknown, and yet condemned; they are killed, and are made alive; they are poor, and make many rich; they are in want of all things, and abound in all things; they are dishonoured, and glory in their dishonour; they are blasphemed and are justified; they are reviled, and they bless; they are slandered, and they pay honour; they do good, and are punished as evil-doers, and being punished they rejoice as being made alive; they are attacked by Jews as aliens, and are persecuted by Greeks; and they who hate them cannot tell the reason of their hatred.

6. It is enough to say, that what the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is diffused through all the members of the body, and some Christians through the cities of the world. The soul indeed dwells in the body, but is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world. The soul sojourns as an invisible garrison in the visible body; and Christians are known abiding in the world, but their religion abides invisible. The flesh hates the soul and wars against it, without provocation, because it is hindered in its indulgence in pleasures, and the world without provocation hates Christians because they wage war against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it and its members, and Christians love those that hate them. The soul is imprisoned in the body, and it preserves the body, and Christians are kept in the world as in a prison, and they preserve the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians sojourn in the midst of corruptible things, looking for incorruption in the heavens. The soul,

injured by meats and drink, is made stronger, and Christians buffeted day by day are even thereby made perfect. For God ordained them to this discipline, which, therefore, it is not lawful for them to shun.

7. For it is not an earthly invention, as they say, that was given to them, nor is it a mortal device that they thus think it right to carefully preserve, nor is it a dispensation of human mysteries that they have put their faith in; but the Almighty and Invisible God, the Creator of all things, has Himself delivered the truth from heaven, and His holy and incomprehensible word to mankind, and established them in their hearts. Not as some one may imagine, did He send to mankind, a servant, or angel, or a prince, or any of the great ones of the earth, or any of those that are entrusted with heavenly mysteries, but the Creator and Ruler of the world Himself, by whom He made the heavens, by whom He enclosed the sea within its boundaries; whose secrets all the elements faithfully keep; from whom (the sun) has received the measures of the courses of the day to observe; whom the moon obeys, when He bids her shine by night; whom the stars obey, as they follow in the course of the moon; by Whom all things were set in order, and defined, and put in subjection; the heavens, and the things that are in the heavens; the earth, and the things that are in the earth; the sea, and the things that are in the sea; fire, air, depth; the things that are in the height, in the depth, and in the midst. Him God sent to them, so that any man might conclude in tyranny, and fear, and consternation? certainly not, but in equity, in gentleness. As a king sending his son, He sent Him as King and as God, as a Saviour unto mankind; He sent Him, as persuading men, not compelling them, for compulsion is not found with God. He sent Him, as inviting men, not driving them; as loving men, not condemning them. He will send Him as Judge, and who shall abide the day of His coming? Dost thou not see men cast to wild beasts in order that they may deny their Lord, and yet they are not conquered? Dost thou not see that, in proportion as persecutors are multiplied, so do the faithful increase in number? These seem not to be the deeds of man, these things are the power of God; these are the signs of His Presence.

8. For what man at all understood before He came, what

God is? Or dost thou accept the vain and foolish words of those eminent philosophers, some of whom said that fire was God, calling that God from which they must keep away: others that water was God; and others that some one of the elements was God, which He created? But if any one of these sayings is admissible, then each one also of the remainder of created things might be shown to be God. But these things are the marvels and error of deceivers. No man either saw Him or knew Him; He revealed Himself. He revealed Himself by means of Faith, by which alone it is possible to see God. For God, the Lord and Maker of the world, who made all things and set them in order, showed Himself not only the Friend of man, but also long-suffering. And such He ever was, and is, and shall be, benevolent and good, merciful and true, and He alone is good; and He formed a great and unutterable design, which He communicated to His Son alone. As long, then, as He confined and kept His wise counsel in a mystery, He was apparently heedless and forgetful of us; but when He revealed and made manifest through His beloved Son, the things which had been prepared from the beginning, He vouchsafed to us all things at once, both to share in His benefits, and to see Him and touch Him. Which one of us ever hoped for this? He then in Himself, together with His Son, knew all things in His dispensation.

9. Until, then, the former time expired, He suffered us, according to our will, to be carried away by unruly passions, enticed by pleasures and lusts; not as at all exulting over our sins, but as enduring them; not as consenting unto the time of iniquity that then was, but as fashioning in us the mind of righteousness; in order that we being convinced of our unworthiness to attain life through our own works in that time, might now be made worthy through the kindness of God; and having made it manifest that by our own strength it was impossible to enter the Kingdom of God, we might be enabled to enter by the power of God. But when the measure of our wickedness had been filled up, and it had been completely shown, that the recompense of it, even punishment and death, was awaiting us, then the time came which God ordained to show forth His kindness and power, how that the one love of God, through His abundant goodness to man, did not hate us, nor disdain us, nor remember our iniquities, but

was long-suffering. He bore with us (saying), Himself bore our iniquities. He gave up His own Son a Ransom for us, the Holy for the lawless, the Sinless for sinners, the Just for the unjust, the Incorruptible for the corrupt, the Immortal for mortals. For what else but His righteousness could cover our sins? Wherein could we lawless and impious ones be justified, but in the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange, O inscrutable working, O unhoped-for blessings. That the iniquity of many should be hidden in One righteous man, and that the righteousness of One should justify many lawless ones. In the foregoing time, then, He convinced us that our nature could not attain life, but now He revealed the Saviour, able to save even the helpless, by both of which He willed us to trust in His goodness, to regard Him as our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Physician, Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Strength, and Life, that we should not be anxious about clothing and food.

10. And if thou desirest this faith and receivest it, first of all (thou shalt receive) the knowledge (of the Father). For God loved mankind, for whose sake He made the world, to whom He subdued all things therein, to whom He gave reason and understanding, whom alone He permitted to look towards Him, whom He formed in His own image, to whom He sent His Only begotten Son, to whom He promised a kingdom in Heaven, and will give it to those who loved Him. And having known this, with what joy wilt thou expect to be filled? Or how wilt thou love Him who has first so loved thee? and when thou hast loved Him thou wilt be an imitator of His goodness. And do not wonder that man can be an imitator of God. It is possible, if He wills it. For it is not by exercising lordship over his neighbours, or by desiring to be greater than those that are weaker, or by being rich and oppressing those that are poorer, that happiness comes: nor can any one in these things become an imitator of God; but these things are all foreign to His greatness. But whosoever bears his neighbour's burden; who wherein he abounds is willing to benefit another who is in want; who, whatsoever he has, having received it from God, by supplying it to those that are in need, is as a god of those who receive his gifts: he is an imitator of God. Then thou shalt see, while yet on the earth, that God rules from the Heavens; then thou shalt

begin to speak the mysteries of God; then thou wilt both love and admire those that are persecuted for refusing to deny God; then thou wilt condemn the deceit and error of the world, when thou wilt know to live truly in Heaven. When thou wilt despise that which is here esteemed death, when thou hast been afraid of that which is really death, which is reserved for those who shall have been condemned to the eternal fire, which shall torment for ever those that are committed to it. Then shalt thou admire those who for righteousness sake endured the (earthly) fire. Thou shalt esteem them blessed, when thou hast become conscious of that fire.

11. I am not treating of strange things, nor do I seek out things contrary to reason, but as I was a disciple of the apostles, I am a teacher of the Gentiles. I minister that which was delivered to me, to those that are learners worthy of the truth. For who after being instructed, and born again in the beloved Word, does not seek to learn carefully the things which have been clearly shown through the Word to the disciples, to whom the Word being manifested has revealed them, speaking freely, not understood by unbelieving men, but narrating in full to the disciples? Who being esteemed faithful by Him, were entrusted with the knowledge of the mysteries of the Father; on which account He sent the Word, that He might be made known in the world; Who was despised by His people, preached by apostles, believed on by the Gentiles. He was from the beginning, who appeared as if recent, and was found in time, and is ever born afresh in the hearts of His saints. He is from everlasting, and to-day is called a son; through Whom the Church is made rich, and grace abounding is plenteous among the saints, granting understanding, revealing mysteries, announcing seasons, rejoicing over the faithful, vouchsafed as a gift to those that seek, in whom the bounds of faith are not transgressed, nor the bounds fixed by the Fathers passed over. Then the reverence of the law is celebrated, and the grace of prophets is known, and the faith of the gospels is established, and the tradition of the apostles is kept, and the grace of the Church exults. In not grieving this grace, thou shalt know what the Word teaches, by whom He wills and when He thinks good. For whatever things we are impelled to utter by the will of the Word commanding us, we communicate them to you with painfulness, from love of the things revealed to us.

12. Having received and carefully listened to which things you shall know what things God bestows on those that rightly love Him, you being made a paradise of delight bringing forth in yourselves a tree flourishing in all manner of produce, adorned with fruit of many kinds. For in this ground the tree of knowledge and the tree of life have been planted; the tree of knowledge does not destroy, but disobedience destroys. For neither are those words which have been written of uncertain meaning, how that God from the beginning planted a tree of life in the midst of Paradise, revealing life through knowledge, which those who were from the beginning not having used honestly, were deprived of it by the deceit of the serpent. For neither is there life without knowledge, nor is knowledge secure without true life. Therefore each was planted near the other. And the apostle, seeing the force of this, and blaming the knowledge which without the truth of a command acts upon life, says, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." For he who thinks that he knows anything without true knowledge, and such as is borne witness to by life, knows nothing, is deceived by the serpent, as one that has not loved life. But he who has knowledge with fear and seeks life, plants in hope, looking for fruit. Let thy heart be thy knowledge; and let thy life be true reason, inwardly possessed; and bearing this tree of knowledge, and exhibiting its fruit, thou shalt ever gather in the things which are pleasing to God; which the serpent touches not, nor does deceit meddle with: nor is Eve corrupted, but is trusted as a virgin, and salvation is revealed, and apostles are filled with understanding, and the Passover of the Lord goeth forth, and choirs[1] (or churches) are gathered together, and are arranged with due order, and the Word who teaches the saints rejoices; by Whom the Father is glorified, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."

[1] χοροὶ according to some conjectures. κλῆροι (Wordsworth).

AN ESSAY ON THE RIGHT USE OF THE FATHERS.

By WILLIAM REEVES, M.A.

AN ESSAY ON THE RIGHT USE OF THE FATHERS.

By William Reeves, M.A.

[The writer of the following Essay was Rector of Cranford, in Middlesex, and published it in 1709 as a Preface to the Apologies of Justin Marytr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, with a dedication to Robert Nelson. It is interesting to note that this dedication appeared in the same year that the saintly Nonjuror, on the advice of his friend Kerr, returned to the Communion of the Established Church. The following extract from the dedication gives the reason for the publication.]

GIVE me leave to remind you, Sir, who it was that proposed the undertaking, and encouraged it to the end. You gave me the confidence to believe, that by a work of this nature I might do some service to the Christian Faith, and the Christian morals, when some moderns were doing their best to reform us out of both. You thought that men long engaged in the fashions and vices of the age, and who had gods for their turn, would be extremely inquisitive and well satisfied, before they parted with every thing in hand, for something in reversion; and that such a sudden deadness to this world, and so lively a passion for the next, such strictness of discipline, and purity of manners, that amazing magnanimity, patience, and loyalty under the most provoking injuries, that strange spirit of humility, meekness, and universal charity, which make up a great part of these Apologies, are so expressive and beautiful a scene of the powers of true religion, and have

kindled such pure fires, and gentle passions in your own breast, that you were of opinion, whoever read and compared them with the present reverse of things, must needs be very far gone not to be affected with the comparison, and to be so far touched at least, as to admire what he will not practise.

But above all, the many bold appeals here recorded, the triumphant challenges to emperor and senate, to put the truth of the Christian religion upon this issue: that if they would bring any one of those false prophets, that passed for inspired, to their tribunals, and if any ordinary Christian did not in the name of Jesus cast out the evil spirit, and put the prophet to silence; and not only so, but if he did not force Æsculapius, Apollo, or any of those dæmons they worshipped for gods, forthwith to quit their possessions with fear and trembling and gnashing of teeth, and proclaim themselves devils in the presence of their worshippers, and if he failed in any one instance, the Christians desired no mercy, but to be looked upon as cheats, and were willing to be proceeded against with the utmost contempt and cruelty imaginable. This, I say, was so public and sensible a proof, so level to the lowest understandings, so daring and demonstrative of a good cause and a good conscience, that you judged it highly reasonable for the less knowing people to be better acquainted with it; and I believe nothing can be found more miraculous and astonishing in all Christian antiquity.

The devil, who in Scripture is styled the Prince, and the God of this world, had reigned as such above two thousand years; upon the coming of Christ, the Oracles of a sudden in a great measure were all struck dumb; the philosophers presently, and men of parts, set their heads to work about the causes of this strange universal silence; some assign one cause, and some another, and some lay it upon the Christians themselves. St John declares, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil;" the unclean spirits own Him to be Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy One of God, and beseech Him not to destroy them. "The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord: even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." After His resurrection, when He sent out His apostles to preach the gospel, He particularly promised the power over evil spirits both to them and their followers; "And these signs shall follow them

that believe; in My name they shall cast out devils," &c. And with what exultation, triumph, and assurance, the primitive Christians appealed to this power over the heathen gods upon all occasions, is sufficiently evident from these Apologies; and the casting out the Prince of this world, being the end of Christ's coming into the world; and the most plain, proper, and convincing argument that all the gods of the nations were devils, being to prove it by their own confession: this astonishing power lasted longest in the Church, and was a standing miracle for several hundred years together, till the kingdom of darkness was destroyed, and the Christian religion became the joy of the whole earth. And was ever argument like this, both for the being of a God, and the truth of the gospel.

But though Christ is said to come on *purpose to destroy the works of the devil*, though He did it effectually to the conviction of the heathen world by a continued miracle, unquestionably of above three hundred years' standing, (yet if we may believe some men) all this devil-craft was nothing more than pure priest-craft only; a bewitching name, that in some measure supplies the place of the devil, and does his business to a wonder; for priest-craft is an answer to every thing, a charm against all the force both of reason and revelation. Surely these priests, if they were men, were very strange ones, and as active, bloody and cunning, as we can possibly imagine devils to be. But while these men tax others with credulity and easiness, for believing a matter of fact attested by the general consent of all historians both profane and sacred, what a train of incredibilities do they (poor wretches!) with a seeming complacency believe themselves? They believe against Moses and the Prophets, Christ and His Apostles, and all the primitive fathers; and what they say were acted by devils, they affirm to be acted by men. They believe that these priests, were a superior order of jugglers, who for two thousand years could successfully impose upon mankind in all the distant places of the earth, that they could make the whole world dance constant attendance to their temples and oracles, at the expense of numerous, costly, and impertinent ceremonies; and persuade nations to leave their country; and kings, and princes, as well as people, in spite of all the reluctances of nature, to sacrifice their sons and their

daughters without a murmur, and think it meritorious so to do; they believe, likewise, that all these priests successively were so much the same, so stanch in blood and secrecy, that in this vast tract of time none could find in their heart to relent, and betray the imposture; that this their craft was above the reach of emperors, statesmen, and the wisest philosophers in the wisest ages; that is, all the world, beside the priests, all this time were perfectly besotted. And yet our sceptics find that these active, bloody, cunning priests, were of a sudden put all to silence, shame and confusion, they find all the demoniacs cured, and all this effected by the most contemptible sect of men living, and merely by the name of Jesus, or the sign of His passion, and that this was the great instrument in converting the pagan world. Let not such men, therefore, especially charge others with credulity, who can readily swallow these and many more monstrous absurdities, that attend the believing the ancient Oracles and possessions to have been pure priest-craft only; but the true reasons why these unbelievers are so fond of laying all this load of craft upon the priests, are, because they would insinuate priests of all religions to be the same, and because the notion of devils raises some ideas that give them pain. They can do pretty well with religion upon speculative principles, but when we come with a proof from the confession of tormented spirits, this is so sensible an argument, and galls so violently, that they cannot forbear wincing and being uneasy; and then they must mend, or cry out, "All is priest-craft." And this being the argument these Apologies abound with, you thought it seasonable they should be made English.

I am very sensible, that the time I have been now spending upon these reasons, I have been transgressing against the mode of epistolary dedications, which are usually laid out all upon the persons they are addressed to, upon their family, their fortune, or something else that is not truly theirs; and so strongly perfumed, that they overcome the perception of what would otherwise offend. But I must tell you, Sir, that these were your own reasons for my entering upon these translations; and did they but come abroad in that irresistible language they came to me from your own mouth, I should not question their good success upon others, as well as myself; and the doing the least good to others, though out of season,

I am sure would be the most agreeable obligation I could lay upon yourself. Besides, Sir, I know full well, what pain I must give you by an epistle of this kind, and what tasteless things the praises of men are, especially in this party-age, to one whose conversation is so much in heaven; he minds them no more, than a traveller does what he hears upon the road, when he is in post-haste to take possession of a vast estate. The commendations of our conscience are our richest cordial; and we shall fare neither better nor worse in the other world, for what we are thought of in this, but as we are in truth found to be by that God, who "seeth in secret, and will reward openly." And therefore did I consult your pleasure only, I would say nothing of you, even upon this tempting occasion, but be as industriously silent, as you are of your own charities. But we, particularly we of the clergy, in justice to such uncommon virtue, in gratitude to so tender a friend, and universal a benefactor, and in consideration of the public good, ought not in conscience to pass by an example of this kind, but with thankfulness to God propose it to the imitation of the world, who choose rather to live by example than rule; for if such shining lights ought not over-much to hide themselves, surely those they shine upon, are not to do it for them; I must then, in compliance with conscience, say something, though at the hazard of your displeasure, and my own weakness.

The men who have won mighty battles, or nicely-managed surprising turns of State, the glittering descriptions of armies, and the glories that surround the head of the conqueror; the court that is made, and the incense that is offered to the rich and the fortunate, with the flattering glosses upon avarice and ambition, and the luscious panegyric on such, as have not even the form of godliness; these, I say, are the characters now-a-days, that make the shining figures in the story; these are the examples dressed up, and cultivated for the entertainment and imitation of the age; and what do these serve, but to inspire our youth with false ideas of gallantry and greatness, to enrage that fuel within them, and set those lusts and passions all on fire, which it is both their duty and their happiness to subdue and regulate: what do these serve, I say, but to bring an ill report upon our most holy religion; to make patience, meekness, temperance, and self-denial very ridicu-

lous things, and, in a word, to put every Christian virtue out of countenance.

And therefore, as ever we hope to redress this growing evil, we must set up heroes of quite another make; heroes who can forgive and bless their enemies, and have overcome the world and themselves: heroes, whose heads are big only with projects of mercy, and whose hands are perpetually stretched out in prayer and alms-deeds, and who are never at ease, but in going about doing good to mankind: in whom religion sits, as it were, in triumph, with all the passions in subjection about her, and with all the lustre that prudence and learning, good sense and good breeding can bestow, to make her amiable; in a word, heroes, who can never be taxed with making religion their craft, and godliness their gain, which is one of the weak and malicious objections at present against believing the priests;

> "——— For they defend
> Altars on which their lives depend."

Though I believe these objectors would not have greatly cared to have defended the altar upon the same terms the priests did in the primitive times of persecution. These, these, I say, are the examples that must make men blush at their mistaken notions of honour, and fall in love with Christian virtue; and whenever we have them in so great perfection, we must not spare to show them to the world, if we design to bring primitive religion into repute and fashion.

There is a happiness of constitution, which I make bold in Tertullian's phrase to call naturally Christian; and which, as I remember, you used to call, "the grace of our mother's bowels;" and excepting, those who were "sanctified from the womb," few of the sons of men seem more sweetly composed and turned by Nature for Christianity, and to enjoy a greater measure of complexional virtue than yourself. The good seed of moral Christianity, and the fear of God, was early cast into the good ground, and has brought forth an hundredfold. You set out for the kingdom of heaven in the morning of life, and long before the meridian of it, was so far advanced in the way of truth, so firmly fixed upon the two Vincentian pillars, Scripture and primitive antiquity, that I find you disputing with the doctors, at an age, when our gentry find something else to do with their thoughts, than to lay them

out upon religion. And for a proof of this let anyone but read your excellent letter to an English priest of the Roman communion at Rome, and he will see a combat in some respect not much unlike that between Goliath and David; an experienced priest vanquished and argued down by one who is but a "youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance." And though neither the hardness of your arguments, nor the softness of your tongue, could break his bones, and bring him over in triumph to the Church of England, yet have they prevailed effectually on others; and a very late convert of yours from Popery, is an instance that arguments are like wedges, which go not well, but when they are driven by a gentle hand. And such is the felicity of your temper, that you draw no blood in controversy, and where you cannot convince, you never gall.

Having thus early secured your principles upon the catholic foundation, your next care was to live, as well as believe, as the primitive catholics did; to set your affection on things above, and not on things on earth; to make God your hope, your joy, your life, your all; to love Him with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself; and by continual application to the Throne of Grace, and converse with the ancient martyrs and confessors, you have worked yourself up into that holy and habitual flame, as few burn with in so clear and constant a passion, either for God or man. The devotions you have blessed the world with, best speak the abundance of your heart; for who can pray with that heavenly warmth and perfection, but one who is always at prayer? Nor can you conceal your alms, notwithstanding all your pains, not to "let thy left hand know what thy right hand doth."

Our misery is mostly of our own making; a captive in Turkey is not in truth so pitiable an object as the slave to his own appetites; and he who, suppose, has five extravagant lusts to pay portions to continually, though five times richer than another, yet comparatively is more than five times poorer, and has fifty times more trouble than that other, who will have no lust to provide for. Nay; one imperious passion, like a single thorn in the flesh, is enough to make a man uneasy, in spite of all the enjoyments upon earth. Here then you began the war betimes, and turned all your philosophy and religion against these bosom enemies, before they had gotten any strongholds

in nature; and what a perfect conquest you have gained over self, is wondrous visible from that perpetual cheerfulness and serenity which shines about you under every condition of life. You have no fortunes now to make, nor any you fear to lose; no ambition or malice to gratify, nor any designs, but against the kingdom of darkness. Thus it is you steer your course with safety and pleasure in dangerous seas; thus it is, that in Job's phrase, you are hid from the scourge of the tongue, when its arrows fly thick from every quarter. For the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocence of the dove, so happily united, that where you cannot please, you never offend. And who is he that will harm you, while you are so prudent a follower of that which is good? Who is he, that can find in his heart to harm you, while you are in pursuit only how to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to instruct the ignorant, and to be a father to the miserable of all parties?

The trouble of self-denial, which some esteem so harsh and hard a part of the Christian law of religion, has been over with you for many years, and by long custom is become now your second nature, the most easy and delightful service in the world. For the pleasure that the proud and revengeful take in sacrificing to their resentments, you take in commanding those passions to be quiet. The dogs and horses, the houses and gardens, and pools of water, with men-singers, and women-singers, and other gratifications of flesh and blood, which the animal man so much dotes on, are strange insipid things to you, and rather your pity, than your pleasure. The game you hunt after is to do good to the bodies and souls of men, to plant nurseries of religion, and to water them with your own instructions, to raise up a righteous seed for future generations, and to increase the kingdom of heaven; and none can think the pleasure of such a life, but those who live it: for there is light and gladness sown for the righteous, which they reap at present from every virtuous action, and which increases with time, and improves upon enjoyment, and leaves no ungrateful relish behind it. But O! the prospect of that day, when the sick and needy, the hungry and naked, and the many you have turned to righteousness, shall stand all about you at the judgment-seat, and be telling of your works of mercy, and pleading for your exceeding great reward in heaven to that King, who shall then say, "Come ye blessed of My Father, in-

herit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: for inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Who, I say, upon second thoughts, would not choose to enjoy your present complacency, and ravishing prospect, rather than to glitter a while, and become the gaze and talk of the people; rather than to be sowing wind, and reaping vanity, and instead of doing justice and charity, to be treasuring up the cries of the oppressed against the day of wrath? But I must no longer follow my inclination, and therefore throw away my pen, as the painter in Plutarch did his pencil, in despair of finishing what I have but rudely begun. The bare relation of your life, would be the greatest panegyric.

May your light thus shine long before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. May you come to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season; and give me leave to do myself the honour of subscribing, honoured sir, your most humble and obliged servant,

WIL. REEVES.

CRANEFORD, *the 22nd of June* 1709.

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AN ESSAY ON THE RIGHT USE OF THE FATHERS.

ONE of the ablest critics, and the most celebrated scourge of the Fathers, after all his curiosity and list to expose their nakedness, cannot but acknowledge, that those times which came nearest to the apostles, were necessarily the purest, and less subject to suspicion of corruptions either in doctrine, manners, or Christian discipline; it being reasonable to believe, that if there be any corruptions crept into the Church, they crept in by degrees, by little and little, as it happens in all other things. Which concession of his, by the way, I take to be a sufficient answer to his whole book. It cannot therefore but be worth our while to translate some of the next best books to the Bible, to open a passage for the unlearned, into the knowledge of the purest times of Christianity, next to the apostles; but not by scraps and quotations, which are neither safe nor satisfactory, but from the entire authors themselves; and by short notes to lay before the people in the most instructing view we can, that primitive form and power of godliness, that strength of reason and beauty of example, whereby the old suffering heroes apologized and lived the Gentiles into Christians, in an age when wit and wickedness, with all the kingdom of darkness, were at the highest elevation, and in confederacy against them.

And were but the translations of the same spirit with the originals, I am persuaded they could not easily be read by well-disposed people, without some good effect upon their understanding and passions. For I find in as clear and deep a writer as any of the age, among several expedients for anti-

doting the minds of the people against the poison of the times, this for one, viz.: "A choice collection in English of the ancient Christians, whereby the people might see the doctrine, manners, rites, customs, polity, and discipline, when the Church subsisted purely upon its own powers and principles independently on the empire." This is the plan I have followed, but who besides this great master himself of style and antiquity, can come up to his own rules, and happily reach that sublime and beauty of translation, he there prescribes? It is no easy matter to enter into the soul of an author, and express him to the life; to hit off a good like, with all the distinguishing graces; to animate a picture, and make the version glow with the warmth and spirit of the original. How well I have succeeded in the attempt must be left to the taste and judgment of the reader.

The Holy Scriptures (God be praised) are at liberty, and in English; but the next valuable writings are still under lock and key, and sealed up as it were in Greek and Latin from the understandings of the people; and in a Church reformed upon the ancient foot, and as yet shining with the primitive purity, in doctrine, ceremony, and government; it is unbecoming, methinks, to let those venerable records we reformed by, and glory in, lie buried in their own language, and of no more use to the generality of the people than a sun-dial in a grave; especially, since the papists make such a noise in vulgar heads, with the cry of the Fathers, the Fathers, as if all the saints and martyrs in Christendom had been Romanists. But this is right romance in a literal sense, and just such another rant only as that of Thrasillus, who in one of his mad fits took the fleet in the Attic haven to be all his own, when he had not one ship there. For when our Bishop Jewell challenged Harding, to try the difference between the Church of Rome and us, not only by dint of reason, and testimony of Scripture, but by the authority of the Fathers, wherein his antagonist concluded the sum of the Roman strength to lie, the bishop brought forth the whole host of ancients on the reformation side; whereas Master Harding could muster up no better friends for Rome, than Martialis, Abdias, Amphilochius, the decretals of the Popes, and such like notable forgeries.

Whoever sets out in the study of the Christian mystery without the conduct of the Fathers, seems to me to be sailing

into the ocean without his compass, in danger of being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, of splitting upon new plausibilities, of beginning and ending with Socinus, Episcopius, and such like presumptuous and self-sufficient reasoners. But the Catholic writers of the first three or four centuries, as they were faithful guardians of the gospel deposited in their churches, so were they much better appointed for the interpretation of it, than any other distant successors; for in the first fervencies of religion, the professors minded nothing else but to provide for their poor, to guard against heresy and innovation, and to live and die by the faith. Whereas the moderate and cooler Christians in after ages, began to strike up a closer alliance with the world present, to mix party and preferment in debates for truth; to fish for gold and silver, and worldly grandeur from the Gospel; and in a word, to have some other designs than purely upon heaven. Besides, the nearness to the apostles, their actual acquaintance with such men as heard the apostles expound their own doctrines, their familiarity with the customs, traditions, and phraseology of the times, and above all, the extraordinary assistances of the Holy Spirit in those early days of persecution, are advantages no modern interpreter must pretend to.

Now the Catholic doctors of the first ages, I find to be all unanimous in the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the necessity of church communion, the form of church government, &c. In the next place, I consider the nature of the evidence this unanimity is founded on, and I find it to be the surest and most satisfactory kind of evidence that can be, namely the evidence of senses; for whether such and such were the doctrines and government of the church in the time of these writers, is not a question of right, but of fact. Not whether these doctrines and government are true and apostolical, for of that hereafter; but whether the Catholic Church actually taught and governed on this wise at such a time or no; and therefore, though I might justly, perhaps dissent from a martyr in matters of pure reasoning, yet I must be strangely foolhardy to call in question the testimony of his senses. For instance, I find Justin Martyr and Tertullian, with all the rest of the holy Fathers about their time, positively asserting the Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, to be truly and properly God, and explaining His eternal

generation without any diminution of the Father, by a ray from the sun, or the kindling of one light from another. Now, perhaps, though I may not think their reasoning or similies hold exactly true in every point, yet I am sure as to the fact, viz. that the divinity of Christ was the article they maintained, though they should differ in their explications of it. For Dr South and Dr Sherlock have reasoned very differently about the principle of individuation, with respect to the persons in the ever blessed Trinity, yet this difference in the modes of explication affects not the mystery itself, which is in truth inexplicable, but it proves the Trinity to be the current doctrine at the time of the dispute; and that things may be, though we differ very much about the manner of their existence.

I find likewise some difference between two very great saints cotemporary with the apostles, between Polycarp and Anicetus, about the observation of Easter. The first pleading the practice of St John for one time, the second the practice of St Peter for another time; from which unhappy dissension I conclude, that Easter was certainly observed, and that Polycarp and Anicetus were not angels, but men; and men too of like passions with ourselves, and withal, that they might both be in the right as to fact; it being the known practice of the apostles to become all things to all men in matters of indifferency, to comply with the customs of every place they came in, as far as innocently they could; and therefore Polycarp might very well know St John out of this prudential compliance keep Easter upon one day at one place, and Anicetus might know St Peter keep it upon another day in another place for the same reason. The error then here committed was a mistake in judgment and not in fact, a disproportioned excessive zeal in a matter not worth the contention. But is this fair arguing, the Fathers were out in their judgment, therefore they were out of their senses; they reasoned wrong, therefore they could neither hear nor see right; but if infallibility of judgment is necessary to make a competent witness of fact, there is not a competent witness in the world. Besides, if such kind of differences may be urged against the testimony of the ancients, I know not what will become of the very apostles themselves; for we find very great differences between Peter,

Paul, and Barnabas. But those enemies of our church government, who make so much of this objection against the Fathers, would do well to consider, whether they can think it credible that such holy men so violently tenacious of any the least thing they knew to be apostolic, so overzealous in such a petty difference of time about the observation of Easter; whether they can really think it possible, that men so extremely scrupulous and stirring against any appearance of innovation, should be universally still and silent in so momentous a change of church government, as that from a parity of presbyters to a superiority of bishops, had they in the least suspected any such change or alteration from the fundamental institution of the apostles, as the objectors now complain of.

But because the right use of the Fathers is a point of late much controverted, and wherewith I think myself particularly concerned upon the account of these translations, I shall enter into the merits of this controversy more distinctly; and in order hereunto the first thing I attempt, shall be to prove,

1st. That the most rational and safest method to understand the Holy Scripture, is to consult the general sense of the Catholic writers in the purest ages of the Church.

2dly. To answer the most material objections against them.

And 3rdly. To show the unhappy consequences of too lightly departing from them.

The first thing to be proved, is, that the most rational and safest method to understand the Holy Scriptures, is to consult the general sense of the Catholic writers in the purest ages of the Church.

The Holy Scripture then I take here for granted, to be a rule, and the only perfect rule of faith and manners; and the perfection of it consists herein, that it contains fully and plainly all things necessary to salvation: not that it is so perfectly full in every mode of time, and circumstance of worship, as to leave no room for any particular laws herein to succeeding governors; nor so perfectly perspicuous, as to require nothing of ingenuity and application on the learner's side. For it is evident in fact, that the Scriptures are not so absolutely perfect, from the forementioned difference between two apostolic bishops about the observation of Easter: it is

evident likewise from the original languages of the Bible, which require much pains to understand, as well as honestly to apply them; and St Peter himself tells us, that in St Paul's epistles, some things are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. And as to matters of polity and discipline, which could not be easily misunderstood in the first ages of the Church, they are now confessedly much less plain from Scripture, as is too evident from the unhappy divisions about them to this day.

Nor is it reasonable to expect that the Gospel should be full and plain in every particular, not only because such particulars would swell it to an incredible bulk, but because it is not fitting in this state of darkness and trial, that men should have the intuition of angels, and see through the whole mystery of godliness at first sight. It was designed only for a touchstone as it were of honest and curable dispositions, and not to break in upon the understandings of wicked men, in spite of their wills; accordingly, we find Novatianus interpreting the Word of God one way; Photinus another; Sabellius another; Donatus another; Arrius, Eunomius, Macedonius another; Apollinaris, Priscillianus another; Jovinianus, Pelagius, Celestius another; and in fine, Nestorius another. Not to mention Ludovicus Capellus, and some other critics of the new way, who by their infinite emendations (if I may so call them) have mended away the very body of the sacred text, and by their new-fangled interpretations have expounded away the sense and soul of it too into the bargain.

Now in this maze and labyrinth of interpreters the question is, which is the most advisable way to take for the true interpretation of Scripture; for upon this hinge it is, that all our controversies turn. Some moderns have been of opinion that the Scripture itself is the law and the judge, because the Word of God is said to be[1] quick or lively; but these expositors must first prove the Bible to be literally alive, and able to speak for itself, before they can prove it to be a rule and interpreter both. Others are for setting up a human infallible judge of controversy, and if they could but tell us where we might infallibly find him, we should be very thankful for the discovery; but to tell us there is such a judge, because they think it

[1] Heb. iv. 12.

better there should be such a one, is in effect to tell us, that we are all born with our clothes about us, and houses ready made by our Maker, because they think it better that we should be so provided, than be at the trouble of providing for ourselves. But our cubit of reason, is not to be the measure of immense wisdom; nor is it just to conclude that what we think most convenient to be done, God must think so too. For by this way of arguing it is easy to prove man, woman, and child to be infallible, for it seems most convenient that we should be all infallible, rather than be at the pains of travelling God knows where, after one that is so, therefore we are all infallible. Others are for setting the sun by their own dials, for making pure reason, exclusive of the primitive Fathers, the best interpreter or judge of Scripture; but I am apt to believe, what I shall make more fully out anon, that the sense of a law is best understood by those who lived nearest the time of making it; besides, our present controversies are mostly concerning facts, whether such and such doctrines were taught, and such a form of government instituted by the apostles; and what can pure reason do here, without the testimony of the Fathers, concerning matters of fact at such a distance? And for Scripture, the sense of that is the point in debate, and so not proper to decide the question. Was the Christian religion indeed to be mended after it came out of the hands of Christ and His apostles, and the work expressly left to the reasoners of latter days, something might be said for our modern refiners; but all the mending that I know of late, has been only making holes in the Creed and constitution of our Church; and that some freethinkers by the help of clear ideas have made a shift to reason themselves clearly out of all Gospel mystery, and the very canon of Scripture itself.

And lastly, to mention no more, there are some others who lay claim to the Spirit for the interpretation of the letter, and if the pretenders could make good their claim, we should be ruled by the prophets; but experience has taught us, what a wild interpreter this pretence to the Spirit has been; that by setting weak heads and strong passions to work upon the Bible, men have been spirited out of their senses, and ran about stark Bible-mad. For having their brains once turned by the teachers to a fantastic scheme of liberty, and their minds all wound up and continually plied with the notion of the new

Jerusalem, where the Lord's people were to reign most purely under the Lord's discipline, to put down all rule and all authority and power, the last enemy that was to be destroyed was the episcopate worse than death, and when all things should be thus subdued unto them, then should they be all in all; and have such a precious Church the like was never seen from the apostles to that day: while this vision, I say, was running in their heads, and their fancies all up after Mount Sion, whatever they read in Scripture seemed to chime in with their imaginary model; all the gracious words and mighty promises they met with, they applied to their party, they were the godly and meek ones that were to inherit the earth; they were the simple whom God had chosen to confound the wise, they were the true Israelites, and the Joshuas, Deborahs, Baraks, Gideons, Jephthas, Samsons, &c., were all types only of their leaders, who now were to root out the idolatrous nations round about, and to establish the Kingdom of Christ with perfect liberty. Such are the vagaries of this foolish fire, which some call the spirit; such the dangerous adventures of forsaking the old to follow new lights; such likewise is the absurdity of making Scripture a rule and interpreter both, and also of appealing to an infallible Judge, which neither Scripture nor antiquity say one word of, nor the makers themselves know where to find; and lastly, such is the pride and folly of setting up naked reason for the soundest interpreter, exclusive of those ancient helps which Providence has left for our learning and instruction in the Christian faith; I come now therefore to what I affirmed for the safest method to understand the Holy Scriptures, namely, the general sense of the Catholic writers in the purest ages of the Church; this is the rule our most learned and judicious reformers went by, what their constitutions prescribe, and what reason justifies, as I shall now shew particularly.

For first, notwithstanding the ingrate and dishonest practices of some late unchristian critics, the Fathers must be allowed not to have been behindhand in the common advantages of men; for their writings speak them to be as great by nature and education, of as much point and solidity, penetration and brightness, and every humane way as well adjusted for defenders of the faith, as any reasoners of the hugest size in these declining ages of the world. But secondly, they not only

set out with as great a genius, with as good a stock of nature and art, but they had the start of us by far in many considerable respects; for we nowadays find it a great impediment in our course of divinity, to learn but the language, idioms, rites, customs, and discipline of the apostolic age, in order to understand the obscurer passages of the gospel, all which advantages they were in a manner born to; so that what is our day-labour was their inheritance. Thirdly, they took all the pains imaginable to cultivate these natural advantages; for laying aside worldly wisdom, and worldly adherences, and every weight, they pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Christianity was the centre of their studies; and the powers of their mind, like rays of the sun, were all united in this point, and by this union they became more shining and burning lights, than those in the succeeding ages of prosperity and sunshine, who began to think it good for them to be here, to set up their staff on this side heaven, to lower their thoughts, and scatter their affections about the ends of the earth; but in bad weather, in times of persecution, they wrapt religion closer about them, they minded nothing else but the business of their souls, and the men of one business are most likely to understand it best. Fourthly, passion, party and prejudice, are things deadly apt to distort the eye of the mind, and contract a squinting judgment; and if a freedom from these is a necessary preparation for truth, the Fathers I hope may come in for as good a share of this qualification, as any of their successors. And fifthly, before the Christian faith was made a part of the civil constitution, the professors of it were extraordinary sufferers, and consequently stood in need of extraordinary comforts and assistances proportionate to their wants, which they enjoyed accordingly; for casting out of devils, curing diseases, raising the dead, and other miraculous effusions, we find not oftener in the apostles, than in the writers of the second century, and not seldom in the writers of the third; and therefore a greater deference is certainly due to those times of inspiration; than to these ages of naked reason.

But farther yet; upon any emergent dispute about the reading or sense of the sacred text, the primitive custom was to have recourse to the books of those countries from whence

they received their faith and Bibles together; and there to collate their copies with the *authenticæ literæ*, as Tertullian speaks, that is, with the originals themselves deposited by the apostles in the churches they founded, and withal to inquire into the constant tenor of doctrine, and the traditionary instructions left there by the founders. For though the apostolic writings contain all things necessary to salvation, yet cannot they be supposed to contain the tithe of what the apostles said and did; and considering the practice of sects in general, and the zeal of the first Christian converts, in particular, it is not to be imagined but those faithful disciples and followers of the apostles drew up several summaries of their life and doctrine, a journal of such things as they were eye and ear witnesses to, or had received upon the credible testimony of such as had been so; which summaries, though not of equal authority with the inspired writings, yet as authentic as any human records, and of singular use and advantage to the faithful of those times against rising heresies, and especially in matters of discipline and ceremony, which are the most disputable points in Scripture. These several abstracts in process of time were collected into one body, which together with the doctrines of apostolic men, in all probability make up the most instructive part of those which bear the title of Apostolical Constitutions, though the numerous trumperies, heresies, and inconsistencies since interlarded, make this collection as we now have it, stand justly branded for supposititious. Now that which I would infer from hence is this; that these summaries or journals in their original purity, or the writings of those who had actually attended upon the apostles, or their immediate successors, who had heard them explain themselves particularly upon several emergencies, and treasured up those pastoral instructions, which the apostles may well be supposed to deliver by word of mouth, to such as they themselves immediately appointed over the flock of Christ; these, I say, were such considerable helps to Christian knowledge, as no modern interpreter can lay claim to; and which ought in reason to give the primitive writers the very next place, I think to the apostles: and so thought the great Cassander, a person of singular piety, learning, and moderation, who was for making the Church in Constantine's time the standard of the Reformation.

But because a general rule is apt to sit most easy and convincing, when illustrated with particular examples, I shall put the matter in this light, and so leave it upon the mind of the reader; the general rule then is this, viz. that the sense and meaning of any law or institution is best understood by the general practice immediately following thereupon. For instance therefore, I find it said (1 Cor. xi. 26), "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." But now it is not said here, nor in any other place of the New Testament, how oft we are obliged to eat this bread and drink this cup; however finding, that the first Christians looked upon this commemorative sacrifice, as that which made way for their prayers to God, and gave the perfume and efficacy to their public devotions, and therefore that they never solemnly met to worship God without it; this general practice, I say, immediately following upon the first institution of the Sacrament, is to me an excellent paraphrase upon this text, and makes it highly reasonable to think, that we are all obliged to embrace every opportunity of communicating, and to eat this bread and drink this cup as oft as we can, in conformity to the primitive custom.

Again, it is urged that there is no particular express precept in the Gospel for infant baptism; to which I might answer, that circumcision made without hands (which St Paul calls baptism), succeeding in the room of that made with hands, infants must be concluded as well qualified to be admitted into covenant with God now by the spiritual, as before by the carnal circumcision; and circumcision being changed into baptism without any change of time, that must continue upon the old foot without some express command to the contrary; and therefore there was no occasion for any particular express precept in the Gospel for baptizing infants. But upon farther inquiry I find it a constant usage in the purest ages of the Church to baptize infants, and to sign them with the sign of the cross, and therefore from such a foundation in Scripture joined with the general practice of the Church immediately ensuing upon the institution, I conclude infant baptism a point indisputable, and the ceremony of the cross to be apostolical. For had there been any innovation in this case, I can hardly think but such scrupulous persons would have made as great a stir here,

as they did about the observation of Easter. However, thus much is certain, that the primitive Fathers had much better opportunities of knowing the apostles' mind for the practice of infant baptism and the sign of the Cross, than any of the moderns can pretend to for laying aside of either.

Thus again it is said (Acts xx. 7), "That upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." Now these words seem fairly to intimate that the first day of the week, or the Lord's Day, was set apart or sanctified for religious worship; but then finding Justin Martyr, who wrote but forty years after the death of St John, telling us in the following Apology, "That on Sunday all the Christians in city or country meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection, and then we have read unto us the writings of the prophets and apostles; this done, the president or bishop makes a sermon to the assembly, to exhort them to imitate and do the things they heard; then we all join in prayer, and after that we receive the sacrament, and they that are willing and able to, give alms." Now finding this, I say, related by Justin and the Fathers in general, it clears up the foregoing text beyond dispute for the religious observation of the Lord's Day in the time of the apostles.

Thus likewise it is said in Scripture, "That the powers that be are ordained of God, that we must needs be subject not only for wrath but for conscience' sake: for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief suffering wrongfully, for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." Now the extent and meaning of these texts is the question in debate; for the resolution of which, I consider first the words themselves, and find it evident, that the necessary subjection here spoken of, is not due to the higher powers upon the score of personal virtue, but because they are ordained of God; and therefore that resistance by force of arms purely upon the account of suffering wrongfully, is against the Christian law: for even hereunto were we called, and are pressed to it from the example of Christ suffering wrongfully for us; and because the suffering which we are not obliged by God to undergo, we cannot be said to undergo for conscience towards God. But for fear I should be out in my reasoning, I make inquiry into the general practice of

Christendom upon the first issuing forth of this new unwelcome doctrine to flesh and blood; and I find as universal agreement in the point of non-resistance, as in any one article of faith; that the primitive Christians were always ready to suffer, where they could not obey; that they looked upon Nero, and the most inhuman Emperors, as God's ministers, and therefore subject to God alone, and that it was not for want of power, but merely out of conscience that they did not resist. I am sure likewise that self-preservation was as much in force, and natural rights and liberties as much natural rights and liberties then as now. But then how far the nature of absolute and mixed governments, abdication, and other circumstances, may alter the measures of obedience, is not my province to determine: all I think reasonable to infer is, that such conscientious sufferers, who seem to have so much Scripture and antiquity on their side, and who know how to want with the primitive quietness, are in a very pitiable condition, and ought to have great allowances made for their scruples. And for this, I think, I have the authority of a very considerable casuist; for my Lord of Sarum has as much charity with something less reason, I think, either from Scripture or antiquity, even for the quakers; for had swearing in general been unlawful, God would not have given us the example of swearing by Himself, nor would Christ have answered upon oath; besides St Paul frequently calls God to witness, and the primitive Christians refused not to swear by the safety, but the genius of the Emperor, because they looked upon the genii as demons. However, because it is said, "Swear not at all, but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest you fall into condemnation" (which, according to the bishop, can only respect swearing, in common conversation), this learned and charitable person concludes thus, "It must be confessed that these words seem to be so express and positive, that great regard is to be had to a scruple that is founded on an authority that seems to be so full."

Lastly, another controversy which has cruelly cankered the minds of men, and almost eaten out the heart of religion, and eats on still as unmercifully as ever, is the case of church government. Nor are men to blame for showing a just regard for what they believe in conscience to be of divine institution. And yet of all controversies, this of ecclesiastical polity, may

in my opinion, by the help of the Fathers, be as easily decided as any. For a form of government being an object of sense, though men may differ in their judgment about the meaning of laws, yet cannot they differ so much in their eyesight as to mistake a monarchy for a commonwealth. Church government then being an object of sense, wherein the meaning of Scripture is the point in debate, what fairer way of trying this cause than by the general sense and practice of the Christian Church in and immediately after the time of the apostles? Nor can the contending parties refuse joining issue upon these terms. For those who admit the canon of Scripture upon the testimony of the Fathers, will find themselves hard put to it for a reason why they reject the very same testimony in the case of church government. For certainly whether bishops were superior to presbyters was a matter of fact full as notorious, as whether such and such were the writings of the apostles. Nay, I may say more notorious, for the superiority of bishops was visible to all, no one Christian could be ignorant of it, and therefore there could be no need of a General Council to define the form of church government, as there was to settle the canon of Scripture.

Now the only argument as yet urged with any show of reason from Scripture and antiquity, for the purity of bishop and presbyter, is this, that both these in Scripture are terms synonymous, or different names only for one and the same order of men. For satisfaction herein I consult the most ancient Fathers, and for the first three hundred years find not one Christian writer, who enumerating the orders of the Church, or the bishops of his own time ever uses the words, bishop and presbyter promiscuously, or ever thought them so used in Scripture. For instance, Ignatius, St John's disciple, Bishop of Antioch, and Martyr, mentions the distinct orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, no less than sixteen times in seven short epistles; but for the ease of the reader, I shall set down one noble passage only, "Be all obedient to your bishop, as Jesus Christ was to the Father; and to the presbytery, as to the apostles. The deacons also reverence, as the ordinance of God. Let no one meddle in church affairs without order from his bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as valid, which is administered by the bishop, or his licentiate. Where the bishop shall be present, there let the people be present

also; as where Christ Jesus is, there is the Church catholic. Without the bishop, it is not lawful either to baptize, or celebrate the love feast; but what he shall approve of, that is well-pleasing to God, that so you may proceed upon safe and sure grounds in all your actions."

Justin Martyr, to the best of my remembrance, never uses the words we translate bishop and presbyter, but towards the conclusion of the following Apology; where his design is only to describe the nature of the Eucharist, with the several duties of those who officiated therein; and because this sacrament was administered sometimes by the bishop, and sometimes by a deputed presbyter, he makes use of the general term προεσὼς or president; but the deacons he names particularly, their part herein being wholly and solely appropriated to their own order. *Vide* Bishop Pearson's "Vindication of the Epistles of Ignatius," cap. 13, p. 183.

But Irenæus, Polycarp's disciple, and contemporary with Justin, urges a succession of bishops from the apostles to his time; and moreover adds, that the apostles themselves committed the care of the churches into their hands, leaving them to succeed not only in the place, but to the jurisdiction of the apostles.

Tertullian challenges the heretics to trace up the pedigree of their bishop to some apostle, and to make out their claim that way; putting the proof of apostolical churches upon a lineal succession of bishops from the apostles. Now this had been a notable silly challenge indeed, a proof scandalously weak and inconclusive, had it not been notoriously evident, that wherever the apostles founded churches they always appointed bishops to preside over them. And then, he not only mentions such an apostolic race of bishops in general, but particularly instances in Polycarp placed over Smyrna by St John, and in Clemens set over Rome by St Peter. And moreover adds, that all other churches are just so episcopally constituted, and exhibit a catalogue of bishops, descendants of the apostolic seed. But for fear of being burthensome with quotations, and for completer satisfaction in this point, I refer to our most learned Bishop Pearson, who has gone through the Fathers of the second century, and examined them distinctly upon this head, and the objections against them, and withal has given a particular answer to the most celebrated

passages in the gospel urged for the presbyterian cause from this supposed community of names.

The heretic Aerius was the broacher of this opinion, ἓν τ αὐτὸν Ἐπίσκοπον, τ αὐτὸν Πρεσβύτερον, "That bishop and presbyter were the very same;" an opinion no sooner published but exploded by Epiphanius, and unheard of till the fourth century. True, indeed, this community of names was taken up again, and strenuously argued for (though not for the same purpose with Aerius) by some eminent writers both of the Greek and Latin Church, just upon the brink of the fifth century. But then it ought to be considered, that the authorities of this age are in a manner modern, and that they receive great abatements not only from their distance, but the disagreement among themselves. For Chrysostom and his followers, who make no doubt but that the two orders were distinct both in office and dignity, under the apostles, and as such appointed by them, yet allow the names bishop and presbyter to be reciprocally predicated of both. But Theodoret will have bishop and presbyter applied indifferently to those of the second order only, or whom we call mere presbyters, concluding those we properly style bishops to have went under the title of apostles. And lastly, Jerome agreeing with neither, will have the inferior priests promiscuously entitled bishops or presbyters; this second order of priesthood being in his opinion originally, and for some time the first, and that of the episcopate an after-addition. Now from this dissension among the latter patrons of titular-community, it is to me pretty evident that the names, bishop and presbyter, are not promiscuously used in Scripture; for were they so used, I cannot but think it unaccountably strange, that no apostolical writer, nay, no Christian writer at all that I know of, should ever use the same words with the same confusion, in imitation of the apostles. However, granting these younger interpreters to be in the right, yet will it no more follow from this confusion of names, that bishops and presbyters are one and the same in power, than that an emperor and his general are one and the same in power, because the word imperator is indifferently used for both, as hath been well observed of late.

After all, though Chrysostom, and Jerome, and the rest of that class, are now the Fathers of figures and most in vogue amongst us (so venerable are the minor Fathers, when they

may be thought to serve a turn), yet the mischief of it is, that these very boasted patrons of the presbyterian scheme are expressly against it; nor can they with all the arts of accommodation be made to conform with it. For every man of them allows that superiority of bishops we contend for, and withal assert this superiority to have been established by the apostles, for fear there should be as many schisms as congregations; and they all unanimously grant the power of ordination to be entirely lodged in the bishop. For Chrysostom speaking as low and moderate of episcopacy, as he well could, says, "That ordination is the sole point wherein bishops are superior, and in this alone they seem to be above presbyters." And even Jerome himself in the very place where he rises highest in the commendation of the presbyterate, he excepts ordination as a work appropriated to the bishop. And the origin of the episcopate in his opinion stands thus, "Before that by the instinct of the devil factions commenced in religion, and the popular cry was, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the churches were governed by a common council of presbyters; but after every one began to lay claim to those he baptized, as if they were his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed all the world over, that one chosen out of the presbyters should be set over the rest, whose office it should be to take the whole care of the Church, and that so the seeds of schism might be destroyed." I have set down the passage at length, because it is looked upon as the presbyterian pillar, and as full of force as the Trojan horse, to the utter ruin of the episcopate. Now that the Church was governed by a common council of presbyters till the divisions at Corinth, is an opinion wherein, according to my little skill in antiquity, St Jerome stands single; and upon these divisions, that a general decree should be issued forth for a new order of bishops all the world over, and this decree taken notice of by no writer before Jerome, is somewhat strange. But supposing it true, it is from hence evident beyond contradiction, that in the time of Paul, Apollos, and Peter, about whom these schisms arose, the episcopal order was established. Besides, this same author gives us to understand, "that the apostles ordained presbyters and bishops through every province." He affirms likewise, "bishops, presbyters, and deacons, to have the same authority in the church

as Aaron and his sons, and the Levites had in the temple." He gives us also a catalogue of the bishops of Rome from St Peter; and tells us, that James the Just was the first bishop of Jerusalem; another catalogue of the bishops of Antioch from Peter; and in his list of Asia, not only says, that Polycarp was ordained bishop of Smyrna by St John, but styles him *Totius Asiæ Princeps*, prince of all Asia.

If then the churches, according to Jerome, were governed by a common council of presbyters till the contentions at Corinth, I ask whether the apostles had then authority to fix a superior order of bishops all the world over for the prevention of the like schisms for the time to come? If they had, and actually did leave all christendom under episcopal government, then I would know, whether such an universal apostolical decree is reversible by any authority but that which made it? Now to solve this by a distinction between a Divine and apostolical institution, in a case of such extent and importance, is in my opinion to solve it by a distinction without a difference. For did not the apostles act by that Divine commission from Christ, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"? Did they not by virtue of this commission ordain bishops, as well as presbyters, in every province, according to Jerome? Does not he affirm bishops thus apostolically instituted, to be of the same Divine authority in the church, as Aaron was in the temple? Did not the apostles appoint the order of deacons to take care of the poor? And does not Ignatius call this apostolic appointment, in the passage above cited, the ordinance of God? And to think that the apostles should make an order of bishops of their own heads only, and set that order above presbyters, which is confessedly a *jure divino* order, is in my opinion to think very indifferently of the apostles? Why then, the order of deacons may continue, now the poor are provided for by lay overseers, and the order of bishops may not, now we are overrun with schisms, I would fain see any other reason for this, but only that deacons are below presbyters, and bishops above them. For if bishops, who in the Christian church answer to Aaron in the temple according to Jerome, may be laid aside by human authority, why not priests and Levites, or presbyters and deacons? And then we may shake hands with the author of the rights, and vote for no orders in the church at all. How then our presbyterian

dissenters can defend themselves under St Jerome's shadow, and make the order episcopal, one article for a just ground of separation, which their patron asserts to have been established by the apostles for the prevention of schism all the world over, passes my understanding; and is a point they ought seriously to lay to heart, as they would not be accountable at the last day for all the divisions, jealousies, and tempests, which upon this very score have been raised amongst us, and that St Jerome himself does not rise up in judgment against them.

Now put these things together, church-government is the point in dispute, the superiority of bishops we think fairly made out from the very letter of the sacred text, and so thought all the most ancient Fathers; this primitive interpretation is farther confirmed by the practice of the apostles, who enthroned many bishops with their own hands; it was never disputed till the fourth century, and then by an heretic, and condemned as soon as disputed. The episcopate was unanimously allowed to be apostolical, and above the presbyterate in dignity and jurisdiction, by those very writers, who in Scripture assert them both to go by the same name. No one church can be produced where the episcopal government did not take place. No general council met to appoint it; the Armenian and Persian churches in the east, those of Spain in the west, of Africa in the south, and of Great Britain in the north, submitted to bishops without exception. And the proof we have for all this, is the universal testimony of those writers, upon whose authority we admit the canon of Scripture.

Here then I would ask a conscientious dissenter, whether in his heart he can believe that the primitive saints and martyrs would invade the episcopal power of their own heads, and in defiance of the apostles, who were so over-tenacious of the apostolic practice in the minutest matters? Whether they would attempt this without any worldly motive, but greater loads of care and affliction, for the care of all the churches lay upon them, and the storm generally fell first and hardest upon the bishops; and men do not usually invade upon such principles; and if they did, whether it was possible for the invaders to prevail in so short a time over christendom, and without opposition, or one word of complaint from the degraded presbyters against the usurping prelates? For usurpations of this sacred kind, we know with a witness, never come

in without remarkable clamours and convulsions, are seldom perfectly forgotten, and the revolution skinned over without a scar. That bishops therefore should obtain wherever the gospel did, so soon, and with such universal silence, cannot be accounted for any other way than that the gospel and the episcopate came in upon the same Divine title.

Bishop, presbyter and deacon, then were the three orders of the Church from the beginning to the days of John Calvin, who was a wise and learned man, but he was a man, and notably distinguished his frailty upon these two accounts. For first, as is evident from himself, and the writer of his life, he thrust himself into the sacred function, without being lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And secondly, without consulting other churches, without any respect to the sense and practice of all Christian antiquity, he of his own head drew up a new scheme of ecclesiastical polity, wherein he excludes the episcopal order, and lodges the whole power of the Church in a minister with lay elders; and taking advantage of the fondness and necessity of the people, and the absence of the bishop, made them swear as absolutely and unconditionally to his new scheme, as if every tittle of it had been dictated from Mount Sinai; though by his own confession but intimated in Scripture, and this intimation never thought of by any of the ancients, nor any strictures of such a form entertained in any church upon earth before his own time. The French churches, with that of Scotland threw themselves into the Geneva model; but we of England with more modesty, and upon surer grounds, followed the plain sense of Scripture, authorised by the interpretations, and the universal practice of the purest churches in the purest ages; and so reformed from the corruptions of Rome, but kept close to the primitive doctrine, and primitive government; concluding, that we might as well reform ourselves out of the inferior orders of presbyter and deacon, as that of bishop. And that if any one of these apostolic institutions might be nulled by human authority, so might the rest, and so we might come to have a new form of church government every moon, or if that seem best, none at all. And therefore, though I have all imaginable good will and charity for the foreign churches, who under their hands have testified their readiness to conform with us, were they in

our place, and plead necessity for their difference, yet being no judge I shall not take upon me to determine how far this plea now will justify or excuse them. But this plea of theirs, undoubtedly, can never reach our home dissenters, who have nothing to object against the moderation of our present bishops (as Calvin had against those of Rome) but only that they are bishops. And therefore I cannot think it either reasonable or lawful, to write ourselves out of an apostolical institution, confirmed by the concurring sense and practice of all the Fathers, by a prescription of fifteen hundred years' standing, by the judgment of our own reformers and martyrs, and by our present establishment; I can never think ourselves, I say, obliged in charity to write ourselves out of this complicated authority into a compliance with such consciences, as make such bishops one article for schism, which their pretended patron St Jerome makes decreed by the apostles for the extirpation of the seeds of schism all the world over.

Thus I have endeavoured to make out the first thing proposed, viz. that the most rational and safest method to understand the Holy Scripture, is to consult the general sense of the Catholic writers in the purest ages of the Church. And this I have done by showing the natural and moral advantages of the ancients above the moderns, for the better understanding of the minds of the apostles: and though perhaps I might justly have advanced their authority higher in matters of pure reasoning, from the extraordinary effusions of the Spirit, which were very plentiful in the first ages, yet I chose chiefly to consider them as witnesses of fact only; because in this view our finest reasoners cannot question their sufficiency, without calling in question at the same time the genuineness of the gospel. And to make this matter yet more intelligible, I have taken for granted what I believe will be hardly contested; namely, that the sense or meaning of any law or institution is best understood by the general practice, immediately ensuing thereupon; and this rule I have illustrated by five instances, which are not very easily made out from the bare words of Scripture, but fully cleared up by the practice of the ancients: and I have insisted the longer upon the instance of Episcopacy, because that eminence is the mark of many an ill eye, and the ground of the greatest heart-

burnings and divisions amongst us; and because from the foundations in the gospel, and the superstructure and settlement of churches after the same form by the apostles, and their immediate successors, we may as demonstrably conclude the order of bishops to be of apostolical, that is, of Divine appointment, as we can conclude anything from history. And now upon the whole, I think I may with reason affirm the primitive Christians to be not only the most faithful guardians of the canon, but of the sense of Scripture also; and therefore when I see some men playing their whole artillery against them, and running riot upon the absolute perfection of Scripture, the better only to run down the use of the Fathers, and by getting them out of the way to fall foul upon the unguarded letter, and murder it to their own purpose, it puts me in mind of the like practices upon their sovereign, as upon the Scripture: for just such hollow panegyrics came whistling from the same quarter, that a good king would reign most gloriously without his guards, alone secure in the hearts and affections of his people, and when they had importuned him out of his forces, how they decided his person I need not tell. And thus much concerning the use and service of the Fathers.

I come now in the second place to answer the most material objections against them.

The design of criticism at first was to rescue injured authors from the depredations of time and moths, or much worse vermin, to enlighten and beautify their sense, and restore them to their original perfection. But now it is the art of finding fault only, or rather of making wounds for the reputation of a cure, and vending wit at the price of honesty. And finding fault being what we are naturally disposed to, and correction an act of authority which we all admire, critics have multiplied in great quantities from this corruption. Happy the man, who can but discover a spot in the sun, or in some celebrated writer; how noble the discovery, and the seeming blemish to be illustrated above all his other indisputable beauties? For instance, we ordinary folks have all this while taken Joseph for a mighty honest upright man; and for his religion, the peculiar care of Providence; and for his benefactions to Egypt, the darling of king and people; and afterwards idolised under the Egyptian Apis. But alas! no such

matter, we have been miserably misled by Moses, and quite out in our mythology; for the modern critics have found out this same Joseph to have been an arrant minister of state, a promoter of arbitrary principles, and a downright enslaver of the people, and that his memory was therefore odious, and consequently the story of his being worshipped, under the symbol of Serapis, a silly groundless story. Thus again, from an iota or one tittle, to question whether Jesus Christ was not a Cabalist, sounds little better in my ears than to question whether He was not a conjuror; however this is new, and out of the way, and therefore wonderful. In like manner to give broad hints that after all the care and integrity of the ancients, our Bible is not yet as it should be; to make Sarah and Hagar, which St Paul really thought to be types of the two covenants, to be the issue only of St Paul's allegorising fancy, or which is much the same, borrowed from some vulgar Midrasch, that is, some Jewish whimsies. These, I say, are marvellous discoveries, fresh and sparkling, and such as never enter into the head of an ordinary Christian. Whether the learned Mr Basnage, in his "Ecclesiastical History," as well as Le Clerc, have not run extravagant lengths in this way of criticism, I shall leave to their readers. But as the best fruit is most subject to vermin, so the Fathers have been eminently pestered with this sort of critics: every mote in their eye, by the powers of the critical magic, thickens into a beam; and the most puisne objection against the first and faithfullest servants of Christ, is magnified to a demonstration, not only against the opinions they held, but against their authority, even in matters of fact; the chiefest of which objections I shall now particularly consider.

The first objection is taken from the difficulty of knowing what the true sense of the most ancient Fathers was, and to make out this, it is urged, that most of the writings for the three first centuries are lost, in which it is possible we might have met with very different relations, from what we find in those now extant.

Now this, to say the best of it, is a very odd way of arguing, weak in itself, and worse in its consequences. For the question before us, is, concerning the true sense of the Fathers we have, and the objection is grounded upon a presumptive one in those we have not; in this case then the lost writings must be

produced to justify this presumption, or the objection is pure dream and imagination. And if such surmises may serve for proofs, or the loss of some writings invalidate the rest in being, historical certainty is quite at an end; and if a man has a mind to gratify himself with perhaps and possibles, he may gainsay any matters of fact in history; because, had we all the histories of those times, it is possible perhaps we might find it to be as he fancies; and the consequence will be, that the Scriptures themselves are questionable, because the testimony of many of the Fathers are wanting, which might have contradicted these we have. Nay, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zanchy, Whitaker, and others, make no doubt but some canonical Scriptures are wanting, from whence Bellarmine argues against the sufficiency of the canon, which is the very argument here turned against the authority of the ancients. But the answer is short, and will serve for both, viz., that what is left is sufficient, or Providence would have left us more; and what we never had, we have nothing to answer for; but not to believe upon a competency, is to be sullen and starve because we have not all, or deny our Maker, because He has not made us angels. But this is so weak an objection that I will pursue it no farther, only I would fain see a good reason, why we should not conclude, that the Fathers (supposing them honest) which are lost, should rather confirm those in being, than contradict them; for the Catholic writers which are lost, were once extant, and read, and approved, and many fragments preserved by Eusebius and others, and these fragments discover nothing heterodox, nor the collectors of them suspect any such thing, and therefore why should we?

Reason 2. It is difficult knowing the sense of the Fathers, because that their writings of the first centuries treat of matters very far different from the controversies now on foot about religion.

To which I answer, 1st. That it is not possible that the whole race of controversies from the beginning of the gospel to the conclusion of the world, should be all distinctly stated and defined by the primitive writers; and if possible, not reasonable, for by the application of a general rule I may distinguish straight from crooked, right from wrong, without a particular instruction in all the infinite variety of curves; and a physician who has plainly prescribed all I am to do for the

recovery of my health, has no occasion to set down every particular I am not to do, or the numberless ways of destroying myself. 2ndly. Most of the modern heterodoxies are but new turned, or refinements upon the old, and therefore the answer then will in a great measure serve now. 3rdly. As to transubstantiation, saint-worship, the infallibility of the Pope, and such like points, the very silence of the ancients in these cases is a loud argument against them. And 4thly. This reason, if it makes anything against the Fathers, makes more against the Scriptures: for in the Bible we have no polemic discourses, no set treatise on purpose about the points now in dispute, but the Fathers enlarge upon the sacred text, improve hints, set obscure passages in a fuller light, give us an account of many apostolic traditions, rites, and customs, and particularly argue against, and condemn many heresies, of which the Scriptures say not one word; and therefore the want of an explicit answer to the questions which shall arise, holds stronger against the writings of the apostles, than those of their successors. And thus it is the Papists argue against the perfection of the Scriptures; there are many controversies now (say they) in religion, whereof the Scriptures make no mention, such as the number of canonical books, of sacraments, the form of trine-immersion, rebaptization, the observation of the Lord's Day, &c., the Scriptures therefore are not a perfect rule of controversies, because there is no knowing the sense of the apostles in these cases: now if the objectors will not allow of this arguing in the Papists against the Scriptures, why they will urge it against the writings of the ancients, which handle abundance more controversies than the Scriptures do, is a question I would fain see answered.

Reason 3. That those writings which go under the names of the ancient Fathers, are not all truly such, but a great part of them supposititious and forged, so that you know not what is theirs, and what is not.

The case of spurious books, and spurious children, I take to be much the same; and should I argue thus, that those children which go under the names of their reputed fathers, are not all truly such, but a great part of them bastards, so that there is no knowing which are theirs, and which not: I hope our fathers would cry out shame on the argument, or else it would make mad work in the world; and yet the argu-

ment holds equally good both ways, against the legitimacy of children, as well as the genuineness of books; that is, the argument is good for nothing, for the spuriousness of some, ought not to affect the genuineness of others; and there is no manner of consequence, that because some false pieces have been fathered upon Justin Martyr and Tertullian, therefore these Apologies, which were never questioned, ought to lie under the same imputation. So that before we take upon us to bastardize, we must give particular reasons for so doing: and he who will not believe a book, or a child, to be the lawful issue of that man, whose name it bears, when he has no reason to suspect the contrary, ought to believe nothing upon less grounds than demonstration, and never to eat or drink till he can demonstrate the goodness of the food; and however this way of reasoning may suit with his head, I daresay it will not agree very long with his stomach.

2ndly. If the spuriousness of some pieces may attaint the rest, why do the objectors make use of the Fathers occasionally, when they fancy it may serve their turn? Why do they admit the canon of Scripture upon the authority of the Fathers; for to admit their testimony in one case, and to reject it in another equally clear and universal, is to play fast and loose, and act upon no principles at all.

3rdly. Supposing a book, not to be that author's, whose name it bears, or to be anonymous, yet if it were manifestly written in the first ages of the Church, and quoted and approved by the Catholic writers of that or the following centuries, I see no ground to object against it, unless we will affirm a good book, without the author's name, to be good for nothing.

4thly. There is an end of all historical evidence, of all law, friendship, and commerce in the world, if the supposititiousness of some writings, the forgery of some deeds, the falsehood of some friends, the adulterating of some coin, must affect all the rest. Nay, there is an end of all gospel, for many spurious pieces have passed under the name of the apostles. But now if there be no rules to distinguish what is apostolic from what is not, why do we receive the New Testament? If there be, I ask, why these rules will not serve in the case of the Fathers, as well as the apostles? For to say, that providence has interposed to preserve the divinely-inspired writings from all sorts of injury, is what we find to be false in fact, because there

have been spurious pieces fathered upon the apostles, as well as their successors.

A fourth reason why it is so hard coming at the sense of the Fathers, is, that those writings of the Fathers which are legitimate, have been in many places corrupted by time, ignorance, fraud, &c.

This reason differs from the former, as clipping does from coining, and the same answer might serve for both; but it is made a distinct article upon which the objectors flourish with great indulgence; and the better to amuse the reader with a fine show of learning, give in a very tragical declaration of the many corruptions which from time to time have befell the ancients. And had they been in the humour, could have wept over the Holy Scriptures in the same tone, and told us, how sadly they too have suffered by time, by the ignorance of transcribers, and by frauds, both pious and malicious, and withal, quoted a most genuine passage out of Tertullian, to let us know how cruelly the heretics mangled the sacred text, and that Marcion used a knife instead of a style, not to corrupt, but cut it to his liking; and so perhaps the various lections in Dr Mill's late edition of the New Testament, will in good time be urged by some critics against the authority of the gospel. But does not St Austin tell Faustus, that if any dispute arises about various readings, which are but few in number, and sufficiently known to the learned, we have recourse to the books of those countries, from whence we received our copies and religion together, and are willing they should determine the controversy. Or if there still appear any difference, the greater number of copies ought to be preferred before the less; those which are most ancient, to those of a later date, are the original languages to all others. Thus do they proceed, who, when they meet with any difficulties in the Holy Scriptures, search and examine things with a desire to be instructed, and not merely for dispute and cavil.

But it is not the common fate of books to suffer by frequent transcriptions? Are they not all subject to the teeth of time, moths, and critics, unless preserved like the children of Israel's clothes, by continued miracle? Why then may not St Austin's rule serve us for the Fathers, as well as the apostles? Why may not the general design and sense of an

author be understood, notwithstanding some corruptions, as easily as we distinguish an old acquaintance, though something disfigured by the smallpox? Are not these erratas and frauds, in a great measure, now detected and cured by comparing manuscripts and other helps of the critical art in learned and honest hands? Do we build any strange doctrines upon any suspicious passage, or any single Father, and not upon their unanimous consent clearly deduced from many of their works, and from many places therein, which were never questioned? Do not the ancients as they now stand corrected in the best editions agree with the Scriptures in faith, manners, and church polity? And how came they, after all these corruptions, thus to tally with the gospel in fundamentals, unless it be objected also that the gospel and the Fathers are corrupted both alike? Before then the objectors cry down an author for spurious, or corrupted in whole or in part, let them bring forth their strong reasons for their loud clamours; let them rally their forces, and try their skill over again upon Ignatius; for while that martyr's epistles are suffered to pass for genuine, there lies an insuperable bar in the way of some men; and that they are genuine, our excellent Bishop Pearson has, I think, demonstrated, to the eternal shame of the Dallæans and all their adherents.

A fifth reason is, that the style of the Fathers is so encumbered with figures and rhetorical flourishes, &c., that there is hardly any knowing what they would be at.

This is much easier said than proved; and were it necessary to set out the primitive writers in their native proper colours, I could with half the pains their adversaries have taken to disfigure them, show as noble plainness, as manly reasoning, as moving metaphors, and just flights in them, as in any of the moderns, enough I am sure to deserve better of us for their writings, (if not for their lives) according to Horace's rule of criticism, *Ubi plura nitent, non ego paucis offendar maculis.* But tropes and figures we are not concerned about, but only whether the Fathers have expressed themselves intelligibly in matters of fact. A certain author has furnished us with one and fifty reasons for the obscurity of the Scriptures; but be these reasons as they will, I think I may truly say, that the writings of the prophets and apostles abound with tropes and metaphors, types and allegories, parables and

dark speeches, and are as much, nay much more unintelligible in many places than the writings of the ancients; and yet these in a great measure are now brought to light by the diligence of learned men. But supposing they were not, how do these figurative expressions affect the plain historical part of the Bible? For instance, cannot I know, "that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" that this Word or Logos took upon Him human nature in the womb of a virgin, did many miracles, was at length crucified, dead and buried, and rose again the third day, and some time after ascended into heaven; cannot I understand these relations of fact, because there are some other things hard to be understood in St Paul's epistles, and harder yet in the Revelations? All therefore that can be argued from hence against the Fathers with any show of reason, is, that such dazzling figures may sometimes render their opinions less distinct and certain, but how they can weaken their testimony in matters of fact, is what I want to know. For supposing them now and then in the clouds, and soaring out of sight in metaphor and allusion; yet when they descend in view again, and tell us plainly, that the order of bishops was of Divine apostolic institution; and give us a catalogue of succeeding bishops, from the apostles to their own time, and withal tell us, that such and such were the genuine writings of the apostles; why is not their testimony as intelligible in one case as in the other? For I take it to be full as easy to distinguish naked truth, or a simple relation of fact from oratory and flourish, as to tell whether a man be dressed or undressed. After all, if this objection be of any force, why do not the objectors except against these figurative hyperbolical Fathers for everything, even for the canon of Scripture? Why don't they suspect some dangerous trope, some snake under every flower? If they say, that they quote them only when they speak distinctly, simply, and without metaphor, let them prove that we do otherwise, or else I am sure we are in no wise concerned in this objection.

Reason 6. That the Fathers oftentimes conceal their own private opinions, and speak those things which themselves believed not, &c.

To charge the holy martyrs and confessors of old with the latitude of a Jesuit, with shuffling and lying for the truth, when

in their Apologies they enter so many protests against it, and scorn to be excused from torments and death by any arts of insincerity and equivocation; this is so foul an article, that nothing less than demonstration can justify a suspicion. But let us see how they make good the charge. Why in the first place we are given to understand from some passages out of St Jerome, for their length only considerable, that in his commentaries upon the Scriptures, there is a rhapsody of different opinions tumbled together in a heap, without so much as intimating either which is good or bad, or probable, or necessary, or to the purpose or not. Now this is false in fact, and the false accuser of his brethren could not but know it, for he has played the slippery part here himself, which he charges upon the Fathers, leaving out a passage which puts quite another face upon the matter. For St Jerome tells us, that it was the way in commentaries to lay down the opinions of others as well as their own, but withal, openly to declare which were heretical, and which catholic. But is not this too the way of commenting now-a-days; and why is it more tricking in the ancients than the moderns?

Secondly. If there is no way of distinguishing St Jerome's opinion from what is not, why do his accusers, upon occasion, deal so much with this slippery saint? Why do they depend so mightily upon his opinion, and not suspect they are in the hands of a heretic, when they are magnifying the Father?

But thirdly. Supposing such a rhapsody of indiscriminate opinions in the ancient comments, what is all this to those who are not commentators? What are opinions and notions to testimonies concerning fact? Can there be a wilder inference, than because Jerome and others, in their expositions upon Scripture, have amassed together many opinions besides their own; therefore Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minucius Felix, in these Apologies, concerning the faith and manners of the Christians in their time, have not written their own minds, but the opinions of other people?

But this is not all; for the Fathers are taxed with insincerity and reserve where one would be apt least of all to suspect it: these holy men, we are told, were as arrant jugglers in the pulpit, as in their commentaries; for in expounding the Scriptures to the people where the catechumens were present, if they chanced to fall upon a passage touching the sacraments,

they would make bold to wrest the text, the better to disguise these mysteries, laying before them that which they accounted not the best and truest, but what they thought best served to the purpose of amusement; just as we please little children with an apple, or some toy, to take off the desire they have to something of greater value. The truth of the matter, as we have it from St Justin, towards the conclusion of the following Apology, in short, was only this. The catechumens were kept under strict discipline for some time, before they were admitted to the privileges of the faithful, both for their better instruction in the Christian principles, and for a trial of their sincerity; and were the profane or uninitiated ever rashly admitted to the Pagan mysteries without any preparatory or purgation? Does not our Master tell His apostles, "He had many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them now"? Do not the apostles say, that "milk is for babes, and strong meat for them of full age"? And is not this now a very notable instance of the dissimulation and tricking of the Fathers, that they took so much care about the qualifications of the new converts, in catechising and instructing them according to their capacity, in feeding them with milk, and not letting them all at once into the most sacred mysteries, as if nothing of reverence, knowledge, and probation, was required to the profession and privileges of a Christian.

But to blacken them a little more still under this head, it is farther urged, that the Fathers, in disputing with the adversaries of their faith, thought it lawful to say or conceal, or reject anything for the advancement of their cause, though otherwise true and allowable: this, I believe, is what Julian the apostate would have hardly charged upon the Christians; for never did men keep up more strictly to the apostle's rule, of abstaining from all appearance of evil, than the ancients did; but this is doing the grossest evil, that good may come of it. And what is stranger yet, this lie is fathered upon their pretended patron St Jerome, and justified by his authority alone, from a mighty long quotation, which to me proves nothing in the world, but only that the art of disputing is like that of fencing, where we threaten one part to hit another; and moreover, that they often argued from the concessions of an adversary, which are a good argument, *ad hominem*, whether the concessions be true or false. But all this is so palpable a

slander, that I will not give it an answer; these Apologies are a demonstration against it; only one cannot but observe, how some men, to serve a cause, will stick at nothing, but write through thick and thin, and bespatter martyrs and confessors with lying for the truth, who died in the open defence of it, when they could have saved their lives for a word speaking, as you will see hereafter.

Reason 7. That the Fathers have not always held one and the same belief, but have sometimes changed some of their opinions, according as their judgment hath grown riper through study or age.

Reasons surely are very scarce things, where this is pressed to serve for one; the reader need only see the argument naked to see its weakness, and thus it stands in form. Those men, who upon maturer deliberation, have sometimes changed some of their opinions, and consequently as they improved in years and study, might change some others, are not to be credited; but the Fathers have so changed, &c., therefore the Fathers are not to be credited. According to this way of arguing, I say, then, excepting the Bible, there is not a creditable book in the world; for there never was a writer, but some time or other, I believe, changed his opinion in some points. Angels then or inspired persons ought only to write books, because nothing less than infallibility ought to be a motive for belief. The objector needed not to have given himself the trouble of fouling so many pages with the errors of the ancients, for we own them to be men, and consequently as subject to mistake as death; but the point to be proved, was, that learned and honest men who mistake in one case, are not fit to be believed in another; that because St Austin retracted many things, therefore he is to be credited in nothing; that because Daillé wrote a treatise of the right use of the Fathers, which in his riper judgment he seems to have retracted, or however might have done, had he lived and studied longer; therefore nothing Daillé says is to be minded. If this consequence be just, then we ought never to read or write, or preach or believe any thing, but the express Word of God.

But 2ndly. It is here ambiguously said, that the Fathers have not always held one and the same belief; the form of sound words, or creed, I hope they always held; the divinity of

Christ, the necessity of church-communion, &c. Now if the Fathers were unanimous in these and other opinions; if they lived to a full ripeness of understanding, and never recanted to their dying day, is it not reasonable to conclude, that they would not have recanted had they lived longer?

3rdly. Supposing some of them not at years of discretion, or ripeness of judgment, this can only affect their reasonings, for I hope a man may hear and see as well at thirty as threescore; he can tell whether such and such writings were delivered to him for sacred Scripture; whether presbyters ordained, and held separate meetings in defiance of their bishop; whether the cross in baptism, the adoration of the sacramental elements, image worship, and the like, whether these, I say, were the practice of the Church in his time or not, any one in his senses might tell without any great perfection of judgment; or do men use to retract their testimonies about matters of fact, if they live to see and hear longer? But I am perfectly ashamed of this reason, for it proves only that nothing is too absurd for some men to question, even the whiteness of snow, or the reality of motion, when the sceptical fit is upon them. And should the supreme power proceed against the subject upon the same surmises, as these objectors do against the ancients, they might hang every man in the kingdom for murder; for it is a difficult piece of business to prove a negative, to demonstrate a man not to be a murderer, and all men are subject to sin, and it is possible, had they lived longer to consider on it, they might all have published their repentance under their own hands.

Reason 8. That it is necessary, and withal very hard to discover how the Fathers held all their opinions, whether as necessary, or probable only, and in what degree of necessity or probability.

To make this reason look the bigger, there is premised a long account of the nature of necessary and contingent propositions, for the illustration of which, we are bid to compare these two, Christ is God; and Christ suffered death, being of the age of thirty-four or thirty-five years. The former of these is necessary, because Christ could not but be God; the latter is contingent, because if He had so pleased, He might have suffered at the fortieth or fiftieth year of His age. Of these two propositions it is affirmed, that the first we cannot deny

without renouncing Christianity, but the second, though true and clearly enough collected from the Scriptures, we may deny without any great danger, as supposing it false. But, with the objector's good leave, I take this for a very bold assertion; for admitting that Christ is God, and that He suffered at such an age, to be propositions equally clear and express in Scripture, I think we are equally obliged to believe both alike, not indeed as equally necessary, but as true; because it is the Word of God which speaks in both cases; and be the matter great or small, necessary or contingent, we cannot gainsay Divine revelation, without great danger. But to our purpose, by virtue of this division into necessary and contingent, we are told how perplexed a business it is to know the sense of the Fathers, because it is necessary we should know, not only whether they believed such things or not, but also how they believed or not believed them; that is to say, whether they held them as propositions necessarily or probably, either true or false; and besides, in what degree either of necessity or probability they placed them. Now all this to me, though it may be very logical, seems very impertinent. For when our Saviour said, "Ye believed in God, believe also in Me, and do ye now believe?" does He prescribe the degrees, or weigh out the just quantity of faith they were to believe Him with? Thus again, when He puts the question to the blind man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" the answer is, "Lord, I believe." Here are no logical questions and answers, how and in what manner he believed; whether he held this proposition as necessary or probable, and in what degree of necessity or probability he held it; the question was simple, "Dost thou believe?" and the simple answer, "I believe," was sufficient. When the Fathers therefore tell us that such were the writings of the apostles, the doctrine, rites, customs, and polity of the Church in their time, do not we know how to understand them because we do not know how they held some opinions, whether as necessary or probable, &c.? For hold them how they will, an error in opinion can never prejudice a testimony concerning fact. Besides, with what zeal and labour did the ancients guard against Jews, heathens, and heretics? With what care and caution did they instruct the converts in all the requisites to salvation? How do they condemn all innovations in doctrine and government,

not only occasionally in their writings, but in set treatises against them? What a bulk and figure do provincial and general councils make in ecclesiastical history. How full and particular their explanations of the creed. How frequent their anathemas to the unbeliever and disobedient. How little do they insist upon their own private opinions. For instance, to name but one, does not Justin Martyr tell Trypho concerning the millenary notion, that many good Christians, in this point, were of his mind, and many not, without any reflection upon the dissenting party. And now, after all this, to object against the Fathers for not letting us know how they held their opinions, is very disingenuous, not to say dishonest; and this objection, I am afraid, falls heavier upon the apostles than their successors, who surely are more large and explicit in their expositions of the Christian religion, and in the condemnation of heresies, than the apostles were, as strange doctrines increased in every age. However, thus much is certain, stated, and definitive, that the universal church anathematized those who did not professedly believe all the articles of the Christian faith as they did; and those also who held not this unity of faith in the bond of peace, nor conformed in matters of a lower order, or attempted anything relating to the church without leave from their Bishop.

Reason 9. We ought to know what hath been the opinion, not of one or more of the Fathers, but of the whole ancient Church, which is a very hard matter to be found out.

Now this and the other two following reasons are much the same, and therefore one answer may serve for all. First then, it is so far from being a very hard matter, that, to a willing mind, it is wondrous easy to find out what hath been the opinion, not of one or more of the Fathers, but of the whole ancient Church, in all points necessary to salvation; and what are not so are not necessary to be known. Moreover, it is allowed that Justin Martyr and others could not be ignorant what was the public doctrine of the Church, and that they heartily and constantly embraced it: but the mischief of it is, that they took the liberty to treat of matters not determined by general councils, or delivered in any of the creeds, &c. This, no doubt, was scurvily done of the Fathers, that they should offer to give us their sense of Scripture, of apostolic rites and customs, and confute and condemn heresies, or treat of any

thing not within the express determination of the whole ancient Church. But why might not they take the liberty which every modern commentator takes now-a-days? Does Daillé keep within the bounds he prescribes the ancients; and in his abuse of the Fathers and other writings, deliver nothing save what the Church has clearly delivered its judgment upon? Well, but what must those do who chanced to live before general councils were to be had? Why, even nothing that I know of, but read the sacred text, and religiously abstain from all commenting, or delivering any opinions, but what are contained in express words of Scripture; and consequently it was mighty ill done of that disciple of St John, the bishop and martyr Ignatius, to write his epistles, and among other speculations to deliver as his opinion, that the laity were to be obedient to their bishop, as Christ Jesus was to the Father; and to the presbytery as to the apostles; and to reverence the deacons, as the ordinance of God, before he was sure of this nice point from the resolution of the whole ancient Church, all which was little enough to make the distasteful notion relish. However, thus much is certain, that the interpretations and testimonies of the earliest Fathers (many of which are now lost) were the great helps and authorities which posterity in councils proceeded on in condemning heresies, establishing creeds, and settling the canon of Scripture.

But secondly, to put the difficulty of knowing the sense of the Church universal in the saddest colours, we are told that particular churches have had great differences in opinions and customs, and therefore it is a very disputable point, which of the differing churches were in the right; I grant it, and say again, that if the difference be not about fundamentals, we may be securely ignorant. Does the Church of England build any more upon these disputable opinions than her adversaries? Or does their difference in some things affect their credibility in all? What if they did disagree about the observation of Easter, a business confessedly of no great importance, and wherein, as I have shewn, both parties might be in the right, as to the apostolic practice, are we not therefore to believe them about episcopacy, wherein they are all unanimous? I grant again, that the fast of Lent was differently observed in divers churches, and say with our own article, that it is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly alike; and that every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change

and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by men's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

Lastly, to advance one step higher, we are told that it is not only difficult, but "impossible to know exactly what the belief of the ancient Church, either universal or particular, hath been touching any of those points now in controversy among us."

For to know this, according to his definition of a Church, we must know, it seems, either the opinion of every individual member of that Church, or of its representatives, that is to say, the clergy. Now to know the belief of the Church in the first sense, he with great variety of harangue has shewn to be impossible, and therefore, say I, needless; just as needless, as to visit every hospital, and to consult the politics of every member in Bedlam, in order to know exactly the strength and wisdom of the nation. And our censor, after he has eased himself of his wit for some pages, confesses as much, viz. that it is not necessary that we should know the opinions, in points of religion, of all particular persons, which are almost infinite in number, and for the most part very ill grounded and uncertain; but that it is sufficient if we know what the belief hath been of the pastors, that is to say, of the Church, taken in the latter sense. Now, as in the former case, he was forced to be a little severe upon the people, for the good of his argument, so here again to ingratiate, he makes them full amends, and according to method, whips the clergy upon the back of the people; "for it cannot be denied," says he, "that both ignorance and malice have oftentimes as great a share here, proportionably, as they have among the very people itself; and that there are sometimes found, even among the plain ordinary sort of Christians in a church, those that are more considerable both for their learning and piety, than the pastors themselves." And here he runs the same lengths again to prove the pastors more divided in their opinions than the people, and makes it a wonder, "if where four clergymen, of the more learned and politer sort were met together, two of them should not upon some point or other of the faith, differ in judgment from the main body of their Church." But now this great master of controversy himself should have told us, whether the belief of such opinions is necessary, and if it is, which way we are to take in this diversity of disputes, where neither priest nor people is to

be trusted; but if we may safely suspend our faith amidst these differences, why all this pother about them to no purpose? I would ask likewise this persecutor of the ancients, whether he thinks there were any among the plain ordinary sort of Christians in the Churches of Antioch or Smyrna, more considerable, both for their learning and piety, than Ignatius or Polycarp? Whether those set over the flock of Christ by His apostles, who had the gift of discerning spirits for this very purpose, were sufficiently qualified for the cure of souls; and whether they did faithfully discharge that office; and if so, whether the same faith and practice will not carry us as securely to heaven, as our forefathers; and whether all necessary points were not yet more fully treated, stated, and defined by succeeding writers and councils, and the primitive pens continually drawn against every invasion of the Faith? And what now would our modern waspish critics have? Would they have more of the Fathers, than to give an account of the doctrines, manners, rites, and customs of the Church in their time, and of what they learned from credible traditions, and other authentic records and writings then extant? Why yes truly, they would have more; they would have them, it seems, have written set tracts against the Pope's supremacy, transubstantiation, &c., that is, of controversies, many hundred years before they had a being; for touching any of the questions now on foot, the Fathers are silent, and therefore of no use; and yet when these gentlemen are in the vein of writing against the corruptions of Rome, then this very silence is judged a good negative argument against them; and it is urged, and justly too, that no article ought now to be imposed as necessary, which was unheard of in the purest times of Christianity.

After all, this reason can affect notions only and opinions, and not testimonies about fact, which are the main things we depend upon the Fathers for; for when Justin Martyr tells me, upon his own knowledge, "that the Christians in his time met all together upon Sunday, and had common prayer, and lessons out of the Scriptures, after which the president made a sermon, and administered the Eucharist in both kinds to the people, and mingled the wine with water," &c., I may take the martyr's word for this, I hope, without turning over every individual writer of that age. Or suppose the Fathers which are

extant tell me, such were the writings of the apostles; is it reasonable to reject their testimony? Because, forsooth, "it is possible that others might have held the contrary, though they did not write in defence of it; or because, perhaps, they might have written in defence of it, and their books have been since lost; for how small is the number of those in the Church who had the ability, or at least the will to write? And how much smaller is the number of those whose writings have been able to secure themselves either against the injury of time, or the malice of men?" And where shall we ever fix, if such imaginations may pass for arguments?

These are all the reasons under the first general; and a man must be in mighty want of reasons, to call in the lame and the blind at this rate to his assistance; for a greater waste of good words, with less argument, is hardly to be met with than in this concluding chapter.

The second general objection is, that the Fathers are not sufficient authority for the deciding of our controversies in religion. And the first particular reason for this is, that the testimonies given by the Fathers touching the belief of the Church, are not always true and certain.

Now not to disturb the critic in dream, in his imaginary triumphs upon the last engagement, let us take a view of his new raised forces; and the ground his first reason is bottomed upon is this: that matter of fact being of a more compounded, and consequently more perplexed nature than matter of right, the Fathers possibly may have erred, in giving us an account hereof; and that therefore their testimonies in such cases ought not to be received by us as infallibly true; neither yet may we be thought hereby to accuse the Fathers of falsehood; for how often do the honestest persons that are, innocently testify such things as they thought they had seen, which it afterwards appeareth that they saw not at all; for goodness renders not men infallible. Now for my part, I have been always so silly, as to think a matter of sense, of sight especially, no such perplexed matter; and to see a king *de facto* full as easy, as to know a king *de jure*. If goodness then will not render them infallible, I hope it may render them credible witnesses of fact, or else why do we receive the canon of Scripture upon testimony? Or where shall we find a credible witness upon earth, if to be so, he must needs be infallible? The point

then here to have been laboured, had been to have proved the Fathers all out of their senses, or rather not to have been men, but drills, weweenas, cuchepies, or coushedas; and then their business had been done effectually all at once, and their testimony quite destroyed, as being not human. And this, by the help of the modern philosophy, had been no hard matter; for it had been only supposing the eyes and the ears of these Fathers to have been a little out of the shape, and the fashion of modern eyes and ears, and then to be sure they had been all drills; and this had been but a very reasonable supposition, since none of them, it seems, could see and hear well enough to be believed. The instances produced to invalidate the testimony of the ancients, are some philosophical disputes about the creation or traduction of human souls, the corporeity of angels, and such-like speculations, to which it will be time enough to return an answer, when either of them are proved to have been stated doctrines of the Church.

Reason 2. The Fathers themselves testify against themselves, that they are not to be believed absolutely, and upon their own bare word in what they deliver in matters of religion.

Well, and were not the Fathers very honest folks for thus testifying against themselves? In this I hope their testimony may be taken, and that they may pass for credible, though they confess themselves fallible. But notwithstanding this fallibility, do they anywhere declare that they are not to be believed upon their own bare word, in what they deliver about matter of fact? As for making their notions canonical, and as absolutely conclusive as sacred Scripture; let those who do it, answer for it. But for us, we look upon the divinely-inspired writings only, as binding in themselves; and upon the Fathers, as much better qualified for the interpretation of the Scriptures, than the moderns; who, though in truth such pigmies, are yet so tall in imagination, as to fancy they can take a nicer view of the sacred text merely upon their own legs, than upon the shoulders of the ancients. In all this chapter, therefore, the author is fighting only with giants of his own making, where he is amassing together numerous quotations, heaps upon heaps, only to prove that the opinions of the Fathers are no farther binding, than as they are consonant either to Scripture or reason; and consequently, that they ought to be examined by the one and the other, as pro-

ceeding from persons that are not infallible, but possibly may have erred. For which reason he expresses his displeasure against "the course which is at this day observed in the world for the discovery of Divine truth; for we are now in doubt, suppose, what the sense and meaning of such a piece of Scripture; here," says he, "shall you presently have the judgment of a Father brought upon the said place, quite contrary to the rule St Austin giveth us, who would have us examine the Fathers by the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures by the Fathers." Now this method of coming at the sense of Scripture, which he is so much disgusted at, seems to me the best of methods; what St Austin himself took, and what he advises: for this Father was not so much a child, as to advise men to search the Scriptures for the sense of the Fathers, but to search them in order to see whether the doctrine of the Fathers was not agreeable to that of the apostles. And therefore all this outcry against appealing from God to man, from Scripture to the ancients, is mere paralogism; for the appeal is only to the best human judges, about the meaning of the Word of God.

Reason 3. It appeareth plainly by their manner of writing, that the Fathers never intended that their writings should be our judges in matters of religion.

This is chiefly grounded upon St Jerome's saying, "That he had allotted himself but three days for the translating of the three books of Solomon, viz., Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles; and that he never did anything almost but in haste, and at full speed; and whoever heard a judge excuse himself by reason of the shortness of time," &c. From St Jerome's writing so frequently in haste, all I can conclude is, that he wrote with less accuracy and embellishment than otherwise he would have done; but the question is not about delicacy of expression, but truth; and if St Jerome was an honest man (as I hope his greatest admirers will not deny), he would certainly take care, though in haste, to write truly, if not finely, or else not to write at all. Secondly, supposing St Jerome did write in haste, what is this to those saints who never offer to excuse themselves upon the same topic? But they do not deliver themselves with the air and authority of a judge, and therefore perhaps their writings are not to be looked upon as definitive. But are not ambassadors to produce their credentials, and judges their commission, before they act in the

quality of either? Christ and His apostles first justify their mission by miracles, and then teach as having authority; and though they did not argue with swords and staves, and burn men to make them believers, yet when they had professed the faith, the professors were punished for disobedience, and Ananias and Sapphira had not suffered, had they made no pretensions to Christianity.

Thus, in these Apologies, we find a summary of the Christian faith, and a challenge to justify it by miracle; "that if they did not cast out evil spirits in the name of their Master, and make those very spirits proclaim themselves devils in the presence of the whole Senate who worshipped them for gods, they were willing to be proceeded against as cheats with the utmost severity." And was not this miracle the same proof of Divine authority in them, as in the apostles? They laugh indeed at compulsion upon the understanding, but yet are for correcting an unruly will, and for reducing offenders to a better mind and sense of their offences, by a severe course of discipline and penance; and therefore, though they argue only with the heathen from reason, Scripture, and miracle, yet when converted, they exhort and rebuke, catechise, admit, and eject them with the authority of spiritual judges; and nothing was done in the primitive Church without the bishop's order. Did not the first General Councils deliver themselves with the air and authority of judges? Or did they draw up their creeds and canons in haste, and exhibit them only as probable propositions, and no farther binding than as they seemed reasonable to the people? Or did they not affix their anathemas, and urge the belief of them under pain of damnation? And therefore to say, that the Fathers did not write as judges, because they did not write themselves infallible; and to rake up every seeming error to show their infirmity, is in effect to say nothing, but only, that to be judges, men must be infallible. If this author means (as he seems to do) that the writings of the Fathers are not of equal authority with those of the apostles, he argues against nobody; for had our reformers been of this opinion, we had had them all translated into English, and read in our churches upon the same foot with the Bible; for every divinely-inspired writing is of the same authority.

The fourth and fifth reasons are, that many of the Fathers

have erred in divers points of religion: and moreover, strongly contradicted one another, and maintained different opinions, in matters of very great importance.

These two reasons might have been put together, but for the more diversion with these holy men, they are divided, and fill up two long chapters. However, he puts on the face of a mourner, and with an air of pity and compassion calls the world to witness, how much it goes to his heart to rip up the errors of these learned and pious souls, but that truth and justice ought to prevail above all other considerations; and then asking their pardon, the critic proceeds to execution, and gives them his blow of grace. But in truth, the poor man had been undone, but for some mistakes of the Fathers, for finding fault is his meat and drink; and how much he loves to feed upon corruptions of the best kind, we may see by the following mess. For here we have a dish of all their several errors in grammar, history, philosophy, chronology, geography, astronomy, and what not; some of which, perhaps, may be errors, some are in dispute at this day, but most of them cleared up and vindicated by critics of another sort. But alas! may not a man be orthodox, without being an astronomer, or a good Christian, without being a good musician? Or is there any consequence in this? The Fathers have erred in grammar, therefore they have erred in faith. Had this gentleman, in one of his critical fits, thought good to let fly against the divinely-inspired writings, he could have made as merry with Moses, as he has done with the Fathers, for calling the moon one of the great lights;[1] and for telling us of "waters above the firmament," and of the "windows of heaven;" he could have exposed Joshua's ignorance for bidding the sun stand still, and David's too, for saying that the "sun rejoiceth as a giant to run his course;" whereas, according to the Copernican system, the sun is demonstrably the centre of the world. He would have pitied the weakness of the holy men of old, for talking of the end, sides, and corners of the earth, whereas all the modern sons of science know it to be spherical. He could have been very witty likewise upon the mistake in the Kings and Chronicles,[2] about the measure of Solomon's brazen sea, whose diameter is said to be ten cubits, and its circumference thirty; whereas every modern geometrician knows, that the more

[1] Gen. i. 16. [2] 1 Kings vii. 23; 2 Chron. iv. 2.

exact proportion between the diameter and the circumference, is not as ten to thirty, but rather as seven to twenty-two. And so again, for chronology and arithmetic, he could have flourished upon the errors of the sacred writers in these respects, and told us how in some places,[1] the posterity of Abraham is said to have sojourned in the land of Egypt four hundred years; whereas other Scriptures[2] tell us that they stayed thirty years longer; and thus in one passage,[3] the number of Jacob's house, who came into Egypt, is computed to be seventy, whereas elsewhere[4] they are said to be seventy-five. But here the answer is short and sufficient, that the Scripture was not designed to make us philosophers, but only wise unto salvation, and therefore speaks not exactly according to the philosophic, but popular account of things; and so here in numbering of Jacob's house, conforms to the common way of using a round number for the whole. Since the Holy Ghost was not pleased totally to exempt the sacred penman from all kinds of insignificant error, this busy person methinks might have spared the ancients for the like, and covered them with the excuse of Acosta, "*Facilè condonandum est patribus, si cum cognoscendo colendoc; Creatori toti vacarent, de Creaturâ minus aptè aliquâ ex parti opinati sunt.*" The Fathers are very pardonable for not having such exact and adequate notions about the creature, considering they gave up themselves entirely to the knowledge and worship of the Creator. But this is not all, for we are told, that the Fathers have strongly contradicted one another, and maintained different opinions in matters of very great importance. Now these matters of very great importance have been often served up before, but to give us an utter surfeit of the Fathers, they are brought to table again; and they are such as these: the various opinions about the millennium, the observation of Easter Day, the infusion or generation of the soul, the reality of Samuel's ghost, the fast on Saturdays, the age of Christ, the procession of the Holy Ghost, &c. All which are questions problematical, such as were and are differently maintained to this day, and with innocence; of which a Christian may be safely ignorant without any danger to his faith. As to the procession of the Holy Ghost, which at first sight seems the most

[1] Gen. xv. 13; Acts vii. 6.
[2] Exod. xii. 41; Gal. iii. 17.
[3] Gen. xlvi. 27.
[4] Acts vii. 14.

shocking difference, it is in truth to as little purpose as any of the rest; for whoever believes a trinity of Divine persons in the unity of the Godhead, or one essence, believes sufficient, without more explicit notions of the modes of the eternal generation and procession, which are mysteries beyond the depth of any created intellect: and I must needs say, that it had been much better, if some great men had only proved the matter of fact, viz., that such an article is express in Scripture, and attested by all the first Catholic writers, and so left it as a doctrine incomprehensible. And now after all these good endeavours to render the Fathers contemptible, I answer first, that supposing them to contradict one another strongly in some points, we lay not any stress upon these contradictory opinions. Secondly, this very contradiction in matters of little or no moment, is a very good reason to believe them where they are all unanimous, it being from hence evident that they wrote not by compact, but purely for the sake of truth. Thirdly, they are all of a mind in the great fundamental articles of the Christian faith, though they should differ in the manner of explication, and use some expressions with less guard and caution, before heresies gave occasion to speak and define more strictly. And lastly, errors in opinion ought never to unqualify honest men for witnesses of fact.

The sixth and last reason is, that neither those of the Church of Rome, nor the Protestants, do acknowledge the Fathers for their judges in points of religion, but do both of them reject such of their opinions and practices as are not for their gust.

As for those of the Church of Rome, it is a shrewd sign, we say, that they are conscious of the weakness of their cause, that they will not stand the test of antiquity: but for our own reformers, sure I am, that they declined not the trial, but appealed to the judgment of the Fathers, not only (as this author would have it) for the confutation of Romish novelties, but also for the establishment of their own doctrines. And though they did not look upon them as infallible, yet they looked upon them as the best appointed judges since the apostles, which is all we contend for. For it is not the part of a judge, (as the objector seems all along to suppose) to make laws, but to interpret those already made. And therefore, though I

grant him, that the Scripture contains all things necessary both for the service of God, and the salvation of men's souls, yet I deny his consequence, that therefore nothing else is necessary; for he himself must allow, strength of reason and application, a great skill in Greek, in the customs and controversies of the apostolic age, with an unbiassed will, to be necessary qualifications for understanding the Gospel, or else that all men are judges alike; and therefore say I, no men so well accomplished for interpreters of Scripture, as those who sat at the feet of the apostles, or their immediate successors, and spoke the language, and lived among the customs, and minded nothing else but to know Christ and Him crucified, supposing them without the extraordinary assistances of the Spirit in those extraordinary times of suffering. I grant likewise this gentleman his fine similes, that brooks of water, the farther distant they are from their springs, the more filth they contract; and that a man in years loses a great deal of infant simplicity; and for this very reason conclude, that the Christian religion runs purer, and shines with more native beauty and apostolical plainness in the writers of the first four centuries, than in those of the succeeding and more corrupted ages.

And moreover, supposing a falling away, even in the sense of this author, yet the apostles who forewarned this apostasy, forearmed no doubt against it; and the best provision against it, was to set up not only pious and orthodox, but prudent and active bishops over the several churches they founded; men not taken up with the little things of this world, and with their faces towards Jerusalem, and yet for the worship upon Mount Gerizim, but such as would contend earnestly for the faith, polity, and discipline, which was once delivered unto the saints, and in all things moderate, but in the grand concerns of God and religion: now about the choice of such bishops, the apostles who could discern spirits could not be ignorant; and such consequently was St Ignatius, when he was set over Antioch by St John; and continuing faithful to the day of his martyrdom, what reason can there be to question the purity of his doctrine, though the mystery of iniquity was then a working? And if I cannot question him as a doctor, much less surely can I question him as a witness of fact; for a man of integrity, I hope, may be a competent witness in any age. So that he who urges the falling away of some, against

the belief of others, may with the like reason urge the apostasy of Judas against the credibility of St Paul.

I will not go about to pursue this writer through all his wood of quotations, to shew only how both Protestants and Papists have taken the liberty of departing from the ancients, in opinion, ceremony, and discipline; for granting all he contends for, I say, first, that in all necessary points of doctrine and church government, we hold with the primitive Christians. Secondly, in some ceremonies we differ, and this too by authority and example of the ancients; though I cannot but think that the more we all conform to the pattern of the Catholic Church in the eldest and purest times, even in the externals of worship, so much the better, so much the more cordial our love and union, the more beauty, order, and harmony, the more like children of the same family, and servants of the same master. Thirdly, as to discipline; and in this indeed, I cannot say, we so much differ from the ancients, as that we have none at all: for of old, all notorious offenders of what quality soever, were immediately censured and separated from the faithful, and by them so strictly avoided, not only in this or that particular church, but all Christendom over, that shame and solitude brought them to a sense of their evil ways, and forced them to submit to a long and severe course of penance; and happy did they think themselves at last, if with prayers and tears they might be admitted to the peace of God and the church again; such was the primitive way of reducing sinners to consideration and amendment, many of whom had lived on without reflection till the day of their death, might they have passed uncensured as in these times of relaxation; and had the church never called in the assistance of the State, but kept the powers distinct, and acted solely within her spiritual jurisdiction, and gravely, maturely, and constantly, proceeded against scandalous offenders; I can see no reason why her censures should not be as much dreaded now, as in her first state of independence and persecution; and the power of the keys, I believe, had been more venerable without the axe of the magistrate; but by mixing powers, the spiritual one, by degrees is well nigh quite swallowed up, and it is the grand question now-a-days, whether the Church has any inherent power of her own, but only as she is authorised from the State, that is, whether bishops ceased not

to be bishops after Constantine's conversion, or the sacerdotal power devolved not upon the civil magistrate upon his turning Christian? If then the number or quality of offenders is by long remissness grown too great for censure, if for fear of bearing too hard upon dissenters, the Church cannot proceed against the grossest sinners, or obey the canon in refusing the sacrament to a schismatic without incurring the penalty of the law, it is not that we dislike the discipline of the ancients, but that our circumstances will not admit of it, and we hope our calamity will not be our crime; until then the said primitive discipline be restored again, (which we say is much to be wished) we must be sure to wait God's good time with the primitive patience, and declare God's wrath against sinners, where we cannot, like the ancients, enforce it. For according to Bernard, "We ought not to omit what we can do, because we cannot do as we ought."

And now I have done with the seventeen reasons of the celebrated Mr Daillé against the use and authority of the Fathers, and do hope that this short answer may serve for an antidote against the poison of that long and spiteful book; and by this time, I daresay, that the reader, as well as myself, has taken a surfeit of reasons. But neither one nor the other had been troubled with so many particulars, had not I found most of the arguments revived of late, and reinforced with fresh supplies, not only to invalidate their reasonings and testimonies in the point of episcopacy, but in many other unhappy differences between us and our dissenting brethren: and because I would do justice to the memory of those saints and martyrs, who deserved much better treatment from the Christian world; and, moreover, because I would make way for cultivating the study of the ancients, and for more translations of this kind. For were the writings the Fathers, such as they are here represented, the reader, but especially the translator, ought both to be sent to the workhouse for better employment. But whoever loves the sport, will soon find wit and dirt enough to bespatter, and something to pin upon the wisest and best man living, to set children and fools a-laughing. Let him but, in imitation of Mr Daillé, describe Noah only by his drunkenness, or David by his adultery, or Peter by his denial; let him but draw a shade over the wisdom, goodness, or beauty of the most perfect in their kind, and lay on his colours purely upon

their follies, vices, and blemishes, and we shall not find one wise, good, or beautiful person in the world. It is a much easier matter to cut than cure, to be witty than wise, and a very ordinary hand will serve to deface, what a Pearson or a Grabe only can restore and beautify. And now after all his pains, and ambitious ornaments, to dress up the Fathers once more in the skins of wild beasts, and to martyr them over again, I think I cannot do better than to shut up their character in the words of their enemy.

"First of all, therefore," says he, "you shall find in the Fathers, very many earnest and zealous exhortations to holiness of life, and to the observation of the discipline of Jesus Christ. Secondly, you shall there meet with very strong and solid proofs of those fundamental principles of our religion, touching which we are all agreed: and also many excellent things laid open, tending to the right understanding of these mysteries; and also of the Scriptures wherein they are contained. In this very particular their authority may be of good use unto you, and may serve as a probable argument of the truth. For is it not a wonderful thing to see, that so many great wits, born in so many several ages, during the space of fifteen hundred years, and in so many several countries, being also of so different tempers, and who in other things were of so contrary opinions, should notwithstanding, be found all of them to agree so constantly and unanimously in the fundamentals of Christianity; that amidst so great diversity in worship, they all adore one and the same Christ; preach one and the same sanctification; hope all of them for one and the same immortality; acknowledge all of them the same Gospels; find therein all of them great and high mysteries;" and I take the liberty to add, live under one and the same form of church government, "for, I beseech you, what probability is there, that so many holy men, who were endued (as it appeareth by their writings) with such admirable parts, with so much strength and clearness of understanding, should all of them be so grossly overseen, as to set so high a price and esteem upon this discipline, as to suffer even to death for it; unless it had in it some certain heavenly virtue, for to make an impression in the souls of men? What likelihood, that seven or eight dogs, and as many atheistical hogs, that bark and grunt so sottishly and confusedly against this sacred and venerable religion, should have better luck in

lighting upon the truth, than so many excellent men, who have so unanimously borne testimony to the truth? What wonder is it if a whoremaster, or a bawd, or an ambitious person cry down that discipline, that condemneth these vices to everlasting fire? To take any notice of what such wretched things as these say, is all one, as if you should judge, by taking the opinion of common strumpets, of the equity or injustice of the laws that enjoin people to live honest. But seeing these holy men were born and brought up in the very same infirmities with the others; we cannot doubt but that they also naturally had strong inclinations to those vices, which our Saviour Christ forbiddeth, and very little affection to those virtues He commandeth. Forasmuch, therefore, as notwithstanding all this, they have yet all of them constantly maintained that His doctrine is true; their testimony certainly in this case neither can, nor ought in any wise to be suspected. So that although they had not any of those great and incomparable advantages of parts and learning, above the enemies of Christianity; their bare word, however, is much rather to be taken than the others; seeing that these men are manifestly carried away by the force of their vile affections, of which the other cannot possibly be suspected guilty."

But besides this, he allows another very considerable use of the Fathers, namely, that upon the broaching of any new doctrines as necessary to be believed, the ancients may be properly and seasonably appealed to, against the impudence of such innovators; and if it can be proved, that the Fathers were utterly ignorant of any such fancies, as these men propose to the world, "we ought then certainly to conclude, that no such doctrine was ever preached to mankind; either by our Saviour Christ, or by His apostles. For what probability is there, that these holy doctors of former ages, from whose hands Christianity has been derived down unto us, should be ignorant of any of those things which had been revealed and recommended by our Saviour, as important and necessary to salvation?" So that after all this clutter of objections, we have at length the objector granting, that the Fathers were warm and excellent preachers and livers of the pure Christian religion; and indubitable proofs of the truth of it, and incomparably qualified for the understanding its mysteries, and also of the Scriptures wherein they are contained; and withal, an

undeniable answer to all novelties, as necessary articles; and if so, then I have all I have been contending for, and from the mouth of Mr Daillé; "and certainly," says Tertullian, "we may believe the evil spirits upon their word, when they confess against themselves."

I come now in the last place to show some of the unhappy consequences of too lightly departing from the Fathers.

Though all the necessary foundations of faith and manners are plainly laid down in the gospel, though the apostles, no doubt, instructed their successors in many particulars about the government and discipline of the Church, which we find not in the gospel; yet certain it is, that they raised not the structure to that height and beauty, and set everything in that perfection of order they would have done, had the civil power been on their side; for we find disorders and heresies putting forth even in the apostolic age. However, notwithstanding these spots and imperfections, the Church was purer and more perfect by much in her infancy, than in her declining age. This, I say, is evident in fact, from the testimony of all sorts of writers at that time; and that it must have been so, as is evident for these two reasons: First, that the Church was then in a state of persecution; and it is not the way of flesh and blood, for such veterans in wickedness as have always been in the service of the world and the lusts thereof, to come over to a persecuted religion, and to quit their present possessions for a happiness in reversion they could not relish. Secondly, the discipline of the Church was then severe and searching; and if her purity and affliction could not defend her from occasional friends, her rod soon found them out, and drove them from her communion. But after the emperors came to submit to the cross, and the beauty of preferment shone full in the eyes of the preachers; when peace, and plenty, and court favours invited warmly on one hand, and the sword of discipline was sheathing up on the other, then abuses came pouring in amain, and propagated in abundance, till at length the Church was overflowed with that deluge of corruption we found it under at the time of Reformation. If then from testimony, and for these two reasons, besides those already mentioned, the primitive Church must have been comparatively the purest and most perfect in all respects, then the departing too lightly from

such a Church, must needs be attended with very ill consequences; for when we lay aside our rule, there is no end of error; the effects of which, I shall touch upon in these following particulars, doctrine, holiness, unity and discipline.

And first, as to doctrine. The many different Confessions of Faith now abroad in the world, are a manifest proof that all are not in the right, unless they can differ and be in the right both together. And as heresies increased, so creeds were enlarged by a fuller and more express provision against them; and for this reason we may conclude, that fewer heresies arose in the western than eastern churches, because the Roman symbol continued longest in its original simplicity. But now that Church which boasts of infallibility, is fullest of error; how is the faithful city become an harlot? And how like one too does she varnish over her adulteries with the colour of antiquity, and after all, wipe her mouth, and say, I have done no wickedness? And how came this work of darkness to its present bulk and enormity, but by closeting and corrupting the Fathers, by expurgations, interpolations, traditions, and what not? Might but the Scriptures have continued the rule of faith, and the ancients the judges of the sense of that rule, we had never had as many mediators in Christian, as heathen Rome, nor purgatory, nor private masses, nor angel-saint image, or relic worship, and many other profitable absurdities canonized for articles, though unheard of in the purest ages of the Church; but this is too large a field.

And as the Papists have killed the prophets, and garnished their sepulchres, murdered the ancients with all the show of reverence for antiquity; so on the contrary, others have set up their idol reason in open defiance of their authority. For Socinus talking of his huge skill in divinity, values himself extremely for having no other master but his Uncle Lælius, or rather some very few of his writings, with plenty of his remarks, for his whole stock of instruction. And what was the effect of this mighty genius's setting up in divinity upon his own and his uncle's stock of reason only, in defiance of the Fathers? Why, he made a shift to reason himself out of his Christianity and his senses into this notable absurdity, viz., to make Christ a mere man, and yet to worship Him as a God; and to exclude the Holy Ghost, in whose name we

are baptized, out of the Godhead. By scorning authorities, and dint of free thinking, he came to that prodigious pitch above the ancients, as to make a new discovery of the rights of the Christian Church, and has left noble hints for his sons of reason to finish, for the improvement of the present age. For this enemy of the ever blessed Trinity says, "there is no scruple to be made but the sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated by any company of men professing the name of Christ," though the Scripture I think is express, that no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as Aaron was.

He makes no scruple likewise to declare water baptism no lasting precept, nor ever enjoined either by Christ or His apostles to such as had any way declared publicly for Christ, or been brought up in His religion from their childhood. As to those precepts and declarations in Scripture, such as, "Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved:" "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," &c. These and many more like passages, as express as words can well be for the necessity of water baptism, and always so understood by the first Catholic writers, who constantly interposed a considerable time between the catechetical instructions, and the baptism of adult persons; these, I say, are all eluded by Socinus, being content with himself alone in matters of history; who resolves the baptism in the places just cited, partly into a mere ablution of the soul, or inward washing away of sins by repentance, and partly evades the necessity of baptism by making the precept neither universal nor perpetual; and all this for fear of coming to a confession of original sin, which your great pretenders to reason are not fond of; so hard a thing is it to find any text plain enough for some men, who affect to lose themselves in a new way, rather than to go right in an old one with company.

Thus again Episcopius and Curcellæus, men of fine parts, of subact judgment, and great politeness, but both too great strangers to the Fathers, have well-nigh trod in the steps of Socinus in most of the foregoing errors; for by overlooking

all that is primitive, the universal consent of the earliest doctors in their writings, and the most solemn determinations of their successors in councils, and by presuming upon waxen wings, mere reason only, in the highest mystery, they signalised their rashness by falling into fatal mistakes even in matters of faith; for they argued against the necessity of believing God the Son to be of the same substance with God the Father, and find fault with the word ὁμοούσιθ, as a bone of contention, a novel term, and not in use before the Nicene Council. But if Christ be not of the same substance with the Father, He must be a creature, and then it must be a breach of the first commandment to worship Him as a God. Besides, the stupendousness of the Father's love emphatically consists herein, that He sent His only begotten Son, not one made of a virgin only for that purpose, but the Son of His bosom and essence, to save sinners. And herein also consists the exceeding philanthropy of Christ, that being God of God before all worlds, He would descend to take upon Him our nature, and to suffer in it for our sins; for had He been a mere man only, what wonder, if He was contented to suffer as He did, to be exalted as He is. So that the Divine economy, and the whole mystery of our redemption, is debased and vilified to the lowest degree, by the not belief of this article. And therefore the Nicene Fathers had great reason to contend so earnestly for the consubstantiality of the Son, and to make use of the term they did, which is fully expressive of Christ's divinity, and used too by the Fathers before that Council, as our most learned Bishop Bull has sufficiently proved against Episcopius; which treatise had he lived to see, I verily believe, would have convinced him of the vanity of his reasoning, and his want of antiquity. Thus again, others of fresher date, by leaning solely upon their own understandings, and the advantage of clear ideas, would prove Christianity not mysterious, and contract the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed into one, and that too a very ambiguous one, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ or Messiah, that is, the Anointed of the Lord, or an extraordinary person sent from God. Nor am I much surprised to find the great author of the reasonableness of Christianity so sparing of his faith, and peculiar in his notions of religion, (to say no worse of it) when I find him so great a stranger to Christian antiquity, as

to beg his friend's information, Whether any miracles were done after the times of the apostles. I am very willing to believe Mr Lock's sincerity for truth, but by his letters lately published, one would be apt to imagine that he and Philip a Limbourgh, Le Clerc, and a few others, were the only persons in reality concerned for truth. But I hope the martyrs were as much concerned for truth as the Lockites, and therefore to set aside the ancients' creeds, and to substitute a single article of his own head in contempt of the Fathers, and at every turn to drop the most spiteful reflections upon the Christian priesthood; this, I say, in my opinion, does not so well comport with that candour and impartiality for truth they so liberally bestow upon each other in these epistles. And had they spent more time upon the Fathers, I dare say, they had not been worse reasoners, nor worse Christians.

But thus it will always be, when men will be wise by themselves alone, and measure Divine truth by their line of reason; there will be nothing but tinkering in matters of religion, and perpetual mending of creeds, when the only thing to be mended is their manners. Which brings me to the second ill effect of departing from the Fathers, and that is, in the point of holiness.

Whoever reads over these Apologies, and compares them with the fifth of St Matthew, will find the hardest lines in that chapter, in the lives of the primitive Christians; loving, praying, and doing good under the bitterest provocations: chastity and temperance, purity and patience, poverty and thankfulness, courage and non-resistance, were the virtues they preached and practised in the plain sense, and up to the full extent of the letter, without shifting and doubling distinctions and evasions, to put a trick upon the precepts, and satisfy the law and their lusts into the bargain. These persecuted people had the same self-preservation, the same force of appetite, and the same reluctances in nature as we have, and therefore no doubt made as careful inquiries into the extent and obligation of these grim duties as we can do. And we have our Master's Word, that people so disposed to do the will of His Father, shall know of the doctrine and its meaning, whether it be from God, much better than those, who study the Scriptures, as some do the statute book, only to avoid the penalties; not so much for going to heaven, as for not going to hell. These are

the students that are so against the Fathers, because the Fathers are so against them. The lives and interpretations of martyrs, the zeal and stiffness of those hardy inflexible Christians are severe and frightful things, nor do comport well with times of suppleness and compliance with whatever sort of religion. The principles of Christian morality were then fixed and indisputable; and though briers and thorns were with them, and they dwelt among scorpions, yet without mincing the matter, they delivered the most unpalatable truths in the most persecuting times, and were themselves the examples of what they taught. But now we have so many questions and quirks, not only about the practice, but even the theory of holiness, that men hardly know what either to believe or practise. For we have burning heretics, and deposing princes, for gospel; penance, and pilgrimage for real holiness; we have faith without works, saints without morality, and morality without faith; Christianity without sacraments, a church without a priesthood, communion without unity, and loyalty without obedience. These are some of the ill consequences of depending upon ourselves only, of reasoning from Scripture with the practice of the ancients, whose writings Providence has spared us for our instruction and example; the neglect of which, I take to be both a cause of our unholiness, and an aggravation of our sin.

Another ill effect of not knowing, or at least of not regarding primitive Christianity, is the want of union and order. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," says our Master," "if ye love one another;" and, "see how these Christians love one another," was the heathen proverb in the time of Tertullian. Love and union was then the badge or phylactery that distinguished the Christian sect from all others. The Church of Christ was then a well-regulated society, like a natural body, wherein all the members maintain their respective relation, and act in a due subordination to, and dependence upon one another; no dispute or schism about fundamentals of faith or government arose in any church, but they all sympathised as members of the same body, and bewailed it universally, and forthwith applied all the lenitives of persuasion to heal the breach; and if these proved ineffectual, proceeded to severer methods of penance and excommunication. For they concluded with St Paul, that without church

unity there was no inheriting the Kingdom of God. For the better preservation of which unity they had their Συϛαλικι, or commendatory epistles mentioned by St Paul, which were letters granted by the bishop to such of his clergy as were going into another diocese, to testify the soundness of their faith, and the integrity of their lives; and to such likewise, as had been under excommunication, or at least suspected so to have been, to declare their absolution, and recommend them to be again received into the number of the faithful. But now this union and correspondence between churches is in a manner quite laid aside; every one forms its own way of worship and polity, without consulting another: nay, one episcopal church can look upon the ruin of another, without interposing a prayer for its recovery, as is done for the welfare of other reformed churches, and as is prescribed by the 55th canon. But from the beginning it was not so; for no sooner was Aerius sowing his tares, and anti-episcopal principles, but immediately the Phineases stood up and condemned the heretic, and so the plague was stayed from the Church of Christ. We can no longer say that Jerusalem is at unity in itself, and that the Church is but one, for it is rent into factions and parties; and Christians divide now-a-days not only upon just grounds, but we have a church within a church, and strife, and hatred, and nicknames of distinction, between those of the same communion: and we have different sects and communions where we are united in one common faith and interest. These things, my brethren, ought not so to be. But it is not likely to be otherwise, while there is not primitive honesty and greatness of soul enough to lay before the people plainly the great sin of separation, about matters indifferent in their own nature. For if schism be a sin, and a damnable one too, as the apostle affirms, then it can never be too often inculcated: that though the civil power may excuse from the penalty, it can never take off from the guilt. But while we go on at this rate with our mollifying ointments, and are for sewing pillows only, and providing for the repose of sinners; while we are continually haranguing upon a false moderation, and can reject a schismatic with one hand, and give him the communion with the other, what do we else but teach the people to err upon principle, and to look upon church communion as nowise necessary to salvation? Some-

thing, it is true, must be allowed to the iniquity of the times; but sure I am, that so many smooth things upon this head would never have been prophesied under the primitive warmth of Christianity. If then, the want of union and order is the bane of all society, either spiritual or civil; if the people by knowing nothing of antiquity, judge only of the primitive Church by the doctrines and customs they hear and see in the places where they live, and consequently conclude that the Christians of old were as moderate and indifferent about unity and order in religion as the moderns; and if this be a very dangerous and fatal mistake, then certainly it is a duty incumbent on every pastor to undeceive his flock, and both in season and out of season, to set them right in the notion of church-communion, and the sin of separation. And the way to do this, is first by the tenor of the gospel, and then by the practice of the purest ages; it being, I think, sufficiently evident from what has been said, that what was the constant opinion and practice of the times nearest the apostles, and is moreover suitable to the precepts and spirit of the gospel, ought to be had in very high esteem by all Christians. This I take to be the only way of reforming upon a sure and lasting bottom, and to draw nearest to perfection, by reducing things (as far as may be) into their natural and primitive channel.

I come now in the last place to the point of discipline. The noise of the seas, and the madness of the people go together in Scripture and experience, and we may as well preach stillness to the one without a sea-wall, as obedience to the other without discipline. Whoever reads over but the tenth book of Sleidan's commentaries, will see such a scene of consecrated cruelty, beastliness, and blasphemy, as will make the hair of his flesh (in Job's phrase) stand up, and put him hard to it from an imagination of hell broke loose upon earth, to form an idea of wickedness equal to what he will there find in fact from the Anabaptists at Munster. And when the ancient fences of the church are broken down, and the reins of discipline let loose upon the necks of the people, and enthusiasm the spur, they seldom stop short of the same pitch of religious frenzy. We have felt something like it at home, and what has been, may be. For not only the power of the keys, but the very name of Church in the sense of the ancients, is now a perfect jest in the sense of some moderns. Christian liberty is looked upon,

not merely as a gracious delivery from ourselves, from the guilt and powers of sin, and Satan, and from the yoke of Moses, but as a total exemption from the fundamental laws of soc'ety and order; that is, the gospel dispensation is such a perfect law (if I may so term it) of libertinism or levelling, that the congregation are holy every one of them; not every man only, but every woman, though expressly forbidden by St Paul so much as to speak in the church, has now it seems the same authority to admit into it by baptism, as a priest. So that in short, the powers that are, both sacerdotal and civil, according to the new way of gospelising, are not from God but the people; and consequently all power being inherent in them, they can determine the form and execution of it as they will, and officiate (if they please) in any part of the priestly function; though it may not seem so august and agreeable to Sovereign Majesty to do every thing by itself, for the people to be masters and ministers both, and to serve at the altar in person, when they ordain the clergy to do it for them. But while the people are poisoned with such schemes of licentiousness, and permitted to sleep under the pleasing delusion, and to look upon the primitive discipline of the church as an arbitrary thing of mere human institution only, and consequently alterable at pleasure; this error, I say, if suffered to go on at this rate, is not unlikely to end, not only in the ruin of the church as a society, but in the utter dissolution of Christian morality. And therefore I shall take upon me to prove, that the primitive discipline, as to its essentials, is a necessary and inviolable order of God; and this I shall show, from the nature of the thing, from the express Word of God, and from the consequent practice of the universal Church; and if these three will not amount to a demonstration of a Divine establishment, I shall despair of ever knowing what will.

And first, from the nature of the thing. The God of order never appoints any government, but therewithal appoints the means necessary to that end. And if he secured the polity of the Jewish Church, which was to be dissolved in the fullness of time, with such a hedge of ceremony and discipline; it is not reasonable to believe, that He left the most perfect and l sting Church of Christ without any particular rules of government; especially since Christ has manifestly fixed the orders of church governors upon the Jewish model; and in the

case of private differences (as shall be more fully evinced anon from Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17), proceeded upon the order in practice amongst the Jews. Had the primitive pastors admitted men into the Church without distinction, and retained them as members in spite of their sins, the Christian society had been justly charged by the heathen, as a college of debauchery; but by admitting so cautiously, and upon such a solemn vow of holiness in the presence of the congregation; and so likewise by publicly censuring, suspending, and excommunicating the incorrigible upon the non-performance of the baptismal covenant; by such acts of discipline, I say, the Church gave a public proof, and the most authentic testimony to those without, of the purity and holiness of the Christian profession.

The usefulness therefore and necessity of such discipline for the reputation and order of the Church, proves it to be from God, as well as the doctrine itself. But secondly, if notorious sinners may be suffered to live in the communion of the Church, and to enjoy the same privileges with the faithful; is not such a toleration a temptation to sin on, and to believe, by seeing no difference made here between the good and bad, that there will be none hereafter; but by being members of the same fraternity, they have the same title to happiness, notwithstanding their sins; that they shall all go to heaven in a body, and be saved, not so much for the goodness of their lives, as their adherence to a party? But now by seeing themselves cut off from the Christian body, their party-hopes will be cut off too; and by finding no communion to be had with an orthodox Church, without an orthodox life, and no salvation in opposition to such communion, they will see the misery of their condition; and this will be apt to bring them to a right notion of things, to a better mind, and better manners. Thirdly, by cutting off the incurable, the sound are preserved. The minds of men are as apt to infection as their bodies; and we are not fond of living where the plague is, purely to try the strength of our constitution. But if Atheists and Deists, Socinians and Antinomians, may lie undistinguished, uncensured in the bosom of the Church, who can tell where the plague will stop, and that the contagion may not spread by degrees throughout the community? Besides, the shame and fear of discipline are mighty checks upon the inclinations of

the less virtuous; and the good likewise are confirmed and strengthened by seeing justice done upon the wicked; and the honour of the Church is vindicated from scandal; and therefore from the nature of discipline I argue it to be of Divine authority, because the Church of God as a society cannot subsist without it.

To this argument from the nature of the thing, I add, in the next place, the express Word of God. Our Lord Himself in the case[1] of private trespasses, commands the injured person to go first and tell the trespasser his fault friendly by himself, and if that will not gain him, to take with him one or two more, and if he shall neglect to hear them, to tell it unto the Church, and if that proves ineffectual, he is to be looked upon as an heathen man and a publican. And that the governors of the Christian Church should not question the power of excommunicating upon such occasions, which was in practice among the Jews, our Lord thus solemnly determines the point, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This then evidently declares an authority in the Church to interpose in the case of private differences, and to excommunicate too upon neglect of her authority; and if so, the argument holds much stronger, in the case of such public offences, as reflect upon the whole community, and strike not only at the honour, but the very being of the Church. St Paul severely reprimands the Corinthians[2] for not having taken the incestuous person from among them; which supposes a power in the Church of expelling that filthy person, by charging it as a crime that they had not done it, and for a precedent for the future excommunicates him himself. The same apostle[3] elsewhere delivers himself in this authoritative form, "We command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he hath received of us." And to put the matter out of question, the main design and drift of St Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, is to mind him of his authority, and to furnish him with rules about the government and discipline of the Church. To this purpose he lays before him the particular qualifications of church officers, and measures the pastor

[1] Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18. [2] 1 Corinth. v. [3] 2 Thessal. iii. 6.

should take about information; how they should proceed as to censures, and the other principal parts of ecclesiastical polity; and then adds, "These things command and teach, let no man despise thy youth." And having delivered himself to the like effect in his epistle to Titus, he concludes with the like charge, "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee." From these and many other passages to the same purpose I conclude, that either nothing in the Gospel is intelligible, or else that the Scriptures just now cited, evidently contain these following orders, viz., that impenitent sinners of any kind, are not to be continued in Church communion, but to be proceeded against by admonition, censure, suspension, and if these will not bring them to confession and amendment, they are to be rebuked with all authority, and cut off from the corporation of Christians. Secondly, that private Christians are commanded by St Paul in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to withdraw from such offenders, and with such persons no not to eat; that is, as Tertullian and Theodoret understand the passage, with such we are not to eat at our own, much less at our Lord's table. And thirdly, that Timothy and Titus, the bishops and pastors of the Church, are the only persons with whom the exercise of this spiritual power is entrusted. If these rules of discipline are not clear from Scripture, we may raise a cloud about anything.

But granting the Gospel not so clear and full, as at first view it seems to be, for the manner of discipline, and the officers to be entrusted with it; yet if with these seemingly plain texts we will compare the universal practice of the primitive Church (which certainly is the best commentary) we must have a mighty mind to be blind, if we cannot see the meaning. For nothing in history is more notorious, than that the successors of the apostles were very strict in the trial and examination of the candidates for Christianity, and that they put offenders under a long and severe course of penance, proportionate to their crimes, and did not restore the excommunicate till they had given good proof of their sincerity and repentance, and made full satisfaction to the Church; and that nothing of this nature was transacted without the bishop's order. I am not ignorant, that the primitive Church varied as to some circumstances, and used their discretion as to

length of time, or degrees of penance, &c., but as to the substance of discipline in the particulars now mentioned, there was as universal agreement, as about the Sacraments themselves. If then the Gospel itself seems so express and clear for such a kind of church governors and for such a form of discipline, and if the practice of the first Christians exactly suits with this scheme, then we can have no greater demonstration in the question before us; for the primitive bishops were extremely fearful of innovating in any point, and many of them had their rules, not only from the letter of the Gospel, but from the very mouths of the apostles.

Thus then stood the government and discipline of the Church in the time of these Apologists; thus it maintained its authority and holiness in the hardest and most persecuting seasons, and increased and multiplied till it became the glory of the whole earth; but when the tempest was over, and the Church on the sunny side; when great men were to be humoured, and the Naamans would be cured in state, and be Christians upon their own terms, then came up the moderating methods, and abatements of the primitive rigour; then began the market of profitable inventions, of indulgences, auricular confessions, private penances, satisfactions, and the whole trade of commutation; all manifest traces and abuses of the old substantial discipline, for the more ease and convenience of flesh and blood. But when these and many other abominable corruptions were grown too common and too big to go down with a knowing age, then the world fell to work upon reformation, but upon different views, different principles. The great men of little religion were for reforming the Church out of its revenues, and stripping the clergy into bare preachers, with little subsistence and less authority; for fear of a relapse under the temptations of plenty and power. Others again turned at the very mention of bishop, and wrote against all sorts of order and church discipline with as much fury, as if whatever was practised in the Church of Rome, was anti-Christian. In short, all were wonderful harmonious in pulling down, and removing the rubbish, but not so unanimous in setting up what was primitive and apostolical in its stead; no, not Calvin, nor Bucer themselves, who complain so loudly and pathetically of the want of discipline. I am far from arguing now for a rigid conformity to the ancients in every point of

discipline, but as to the main or essence of it, I think it as plainly and expressly founded in Scripture, as baptism and the supper of the Lord; and that notorious drunkards, swearers, adulterers, murderers, and such like, should communicate in all the privileges of the Church and that the faithful should familiarly converse with such infectious persons; or that excommunicates should be restored to the peace of the Church, without any proofs of their amendment; this I take to be as clearly against the letter of the gospel, as idolatry against the second commandment.

It is objected indeed that though order and discipline are necessary, and commanded in the gospel, yet as to this or that particular way or form of discipline, churches are at liberty. But to this I answer; had the gospel commanded discipline in general only, without question churches then had been at liberty to have regulated themselves as they judged most proper to their present circumstances; but where the apostles have interposed, and prescribed particular rules of discipline, and commanded the observation of them over and over again in the name of Jesus Christ, without the least intimation of dispensation or change; and which rules, moreover were strictly and universally observed by the primitive Church for some centuries; there, I say, it is not sufficient to have discipline of another sort, but we must have the discipline prescribed by the apostles. For instance, it is an apostolical order, and pressed in the name of Jesus Christ, to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; to note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. I ask, then, whether this rule is not neglected now in this particular, and whether the neglect of it is justifiable, and such a disorderly walker to be conversed with, and cherished in the bosom of the faithful? It is an apostolical order, and constantly observed of old, that scandalous livers should be debarred the holy mysteries. Is this rule dispensable at pleasure, or practicable at present? It is an apostolical order, that impenitent sinners should not only be debarred some privileges, but quite cut off from the Christian community, and not re-admitted till satisfaction made to the Church, and good proof of their repentance. Is this an order *pro hinc* and *nunc* only; or are excommunication and satisfaction to the Church, things to be

mentioned now with safety? Or indeed have we any office for the readmission of excommunicates, which seems to be a desideratum in our excellent Liturgy, and occasioned purely by the want of discipline? And lastly, the administration of church order and discipline was committed by the apostles to the bishops as their successors, and by them to the inferior clergy; they were the persons originally entrusted with the sole power of judging in cases purely spiritual, of inflicting penances, suspensions, excommunications, and providing for order and decency in the Church of Christ: and thus was the ecclesiastical power exercised constantly in the first and purest ages of Christianity. What the present practice is, need not be told; and by what authority, either from Scripture or antiquity, such ecclesiastical polities are erected, where pastors and people act jointly, or where churchmen have sometimes the least share in the spiritual jurisdiction, is what I am at a loss to know. For where the manner of government, and some particulars in discipline are positively fixed by the apostles, there we are not at liberty to alter.

It has been likewise urged with confidence enough, that by the magistrate's turning Christian, the necessity of church discipline is superseded, and the administration of it much safer in the hands of the laity than the clergy, and that two independent powers in the same state are contradictory, and destructive of each other.

I readily grant that a Christian magistrate, who beareth not the sword in vain, but with a knowing zeal draweth it against evil-doers, in the defence of those that do well, is highly instrumental to the glory of God, the credit of Christianity, and the good of his country; I acknowledge freely also, that the spirit of reformation now moving upon the hearts of many excellent lay-Christians, and quickening them to the execution of the laws of the land, and the proclamations of her Majesty against immorality and profaneness, is a mighty check upon disorderly walkers, and has given a new life and resurrection to piety and good manners, and in some measure made amends for the lamentable relaxation and decay of discipline; but then I must as freely own likewise, that the laws of the State are not the discipline of the Church; the things of Cæsar, and the things of God, are not under the same predicament, but of a quite different nature; each have their proper

boundaries and restrictions. The powers of Church and State are not, cannot be, two sovereign independent powers, with respect to the same things, for this indeed would introduce perpetual clashing and confusion; but the Church has nothing to do to interfere or meddle in affairs of State, it touches neither life, nor limb, nor civil property, nor disables anyone from being a member of the Commonwealth; and therefore in its own nature is not prejudicial to the authority of the civil power. For all Christians by their own law are expressly forbid to resist the civil magistrate under pain of damnation; and in the full height and rigour of discipline, when Church and State were at the utmost variance, we find our apologists thus acquitting themselves to the Senate upon this article. Did you ever hear of any such thing as a rebel Christian? Had ever Cæsar his taxes paid more conscientiously, or was more faithfully served in peace or war than by Christians? Had ever husbands better wives, parents better children, masters better servants, than those who came over to the faith? So that we find, that the primitive power of the Church in regulating her own members in matters purely spiritual, independently on the State, was so far in fact at its first institution from entrenching upon the civil authority, that it advanced obedience to princes, and every relative duty to the highest perfection, and secured them upon the surest foundation. As to the objection against church discipline in the hands of the clergy, (for the clergy now-a-days are to be loaded with everything) drawn from the accidental abuse of it, it is mere cant and paralogism: for would we deal fairly, we must argue from the natural tendency of such a discipline in such hands, and not from the accidental abuses of it. The original institution of church power is certainly in its own nature productive of great temporal blessings to any kingdom; are the clergy then of a quite different constitution from other people? Are men intoxicated by ordination, and enter into covenant with mischief, and commence tyrants by turning ministers of Christ? If not, where is the force of this argument against discipline, from the abuses of it in the hands of the clergy? What things, I pray, are not subject to abuses? The worship of God, the sacraments, the Scriptures, have been all abused; not one office from the sceptre to the constable's staff, but some time or other has

been abused; and are all these then to be laid aside for fear of corruption? If not, why is the government of the Church to be wrested out of the episcopal hands for this reason?

But this is not all, for the question turns not so much upon the nature of the discipline, as the authority of its founder: for if Christ has set up a kingdom of His own, perfectly distinct from that of Cæsar, and set apart His own ministers, and lodged the government in their hands alone, with particular express rules about order and discipline, and promised to be with them to the end of the world; and if men will call this government tyrannical, it reflects directly upon the Founder; however it is a tyranny of Divine institution, and must be obeyed, be the consequences of obedience what they will. And if such a form of church government, and the particulars of discipline already mentioned, are not evident from Scripture and church history, it is in vain to argue anything from either; if they are evident, then, though circumstances may be varied, yet as to substance, they are both invariable, because of Divine appointment; unless the word of God can as evidently be produced for the investing the civil magistrate with an entire authority in spiritual matters upon his embracing Christianity; this then is the point to be proved.

After all, what is this tyranny, or abuse of church power, which is charged upon our Church? Why nothing but a primitive right of proceeding against notorious sinners, either by censure, suspension, or excommunication, according to the nature of the crime, and the degrees of obstinacy; and upon hearty repentance, to receive them again. And is this any more tyranny, than what the meanest society pretends to over its members, as well as the Church? Without which, there will not in time be so much as the face of religion, or the very virtue of hypocrisy left amongst us. Now that which I would leave upon the mind of my readers from hence, is this; First, that we search the Scriptures, and the primitive Fathers to know what particulars in discipline are appointed by God, and do what we can to have them restored to life again. Secondly, that we consider seriously what the reformation of manners, and the reputation of Christ's Church require farther in point of discipline, and herein copy after the ancients in what is most edifying. And thirdly, that

we take all the care imaginable not to exceed the bounds of our commission, and intrench upon the civil prerogative, but pursue our orders as delivered in Scripture, and understood and practised by the first and most faithful ministers of Christ; then shall we proceed upon the most warrantable grounds, and be sure to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

I have now done with the three things proposed; viz. concerning the use and authority of the Fathers; concerning the objections against them, and the ill consequence of too lightly departing from them.

And if I have proved the ancients, incomparably the best interpreters of the divinely-inspired writings; if I have done justice to their injured memories, or in some measure wiped off the dirt and calumny of ill-given critics; if I have exposed the tragical effects of indulging our private fancies in religion, and of surrendering up ourselves entirely to the conduct of clear ideas in matters of faith, without vouchsafing to consult those who were instructed by the apostles; if I have gone out of the way awhile, the deeper to imprint the indispensableness of the primitive discipline in some particulars; and if these are but too reasonable subjects in this age of licentiousness, where men will be Christians without baptism, and priests of their own ordination, and eat and drink at their own tables in remembrance of Christ, in the nature of a grace-cup merely; then I hope digressions of this kind may be tolerable in such a crisis; and that I shall not be condemned at least by the lovers of Christian antiquity, for being so long in the vindication of the best men next the apostles, and the best books next the Bible. I was willing likewise to say what I could, to infuse an ambitious warmth in the younger clergy of entering upon the study of divinity, with the Scriptures in conjunction with the Fathers, and to form their notions, and fashion their minds by the doctrine and example of Christ and His apostles, and the noble army of martyrs; and not to take up, and quench their thirst with the corrupted streams of modern systems; and the public, I am sure, has nothing to fear from a clergy so initiated. For they will instruct their people in primitive holiness, and primitive obedience; they will have a just and knowing zeal for the unalienable rights of the Christian Church,

and a judicious charity and tenderness for their dissenting brethren; they will never preach up the Church into secular dominion, nor preach it down to a kirk for the sake of unity; they will do what is possible, according to the apostle's rule, to live peaceable with all men; they will part with their coat and cloak also towards an accommodation, but they cannot be so comprehensive as to part with their head; they cannot in duty to Christ and His apostles, or in respect to their successors till of yesterday, comply with an ordination without a bishop. They are ready to pay all deference to the moderns in points of the philosophy, but can see no reason to depart from the ancients in such matters of divinity, as they universally agree upon. And therefore I shall speak yet but once more in the behalf of the Fathers, and that too in the words of Job,[1] "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing. Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart."

[1] Job viii. 8, 9, 10.

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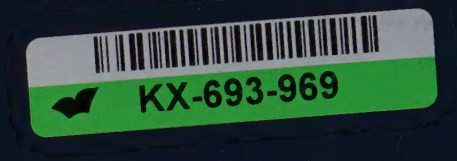
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